

From The Christian Remembrancer.

The Life of Charlotte Bronte. By Mrs. Gaskell. Smith, Elder, & Co., Cornhill.

It used to be thought the reviewers' duty and office to be caterers for the world of readers, to be leaders of taste, to direct public attention into certain channels, to recommend books, or to dissuade from them, to take the trouble and responsibility of a first perusal; and there was at least the theory that the public was a very docile pupil, who liked guidance, and waited for direction. But who has waited for the critic's dictum to read the life of Charlotte Bronte? Can we hope to be beforehand with the most remote subscriber to Mudie's or his own sluggish country library, so as to indoctrinate him with our views, before he has formed his own, of the book of the season—the one book that all the world has read and talked about—and what is much more, that all readers have, according to their capacity, thought over with some real effort to understand its problem, and learn its lesson? And what is this book which has awakened such general interest—what is the life which has struck the universal chord of feeling? It is the very quietest life that was ever lived through, if we are to make variety and action our estimate of living; and this still, uneventful, obscure existence, was lived by a plain, diminutive woman, poor, shy, and unattractive.

The contrast between this outer life and the inner life which accompanied it, constitutes the interest of this remarkable biography. It supplies an illustration of the divine axiom that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth. These words, in their fullest sense, apply to a nobler life and higher aims than are recorded here; but they must also apply to that gift of life which God gives to all his intelligent creatures—that glorious gift of being, sensation, and consciousness. Here is truly a life. Charlotte Bronte lived with a reality and clearness which throw busier careers into mist and shade; here was thought, feeling, passion, the more intense (though not the better, or the happier) for being confined in the narrowest range—in the sphere, as it would at

first sight appear, least congenial with our intenser emotions. And we learn what small external aids are needed to develop this gift, to expand thought, to concentrate feeling, to intensify emotion: a narrow, ascetic, silent home, a few wild moors, an expanse of sky reflecting the season's changes, an occasional glimpse of the sea, one or two friends, a few rough neighbors, the roll and murmur of the distant world caught through the journals which reached her remote Yorkshire solitude. Once a sojourn in a foreign school; now and then, at distant intervals, a journey within the range of the one village conveyance; a short, sad experience of governess life; fewer adventures than fall to the lot of most monotonous existences; fewer incidents than excite most slaves to a mechanical employment—these furnished training enough for the acute intellect, taught the secrets of the human heart, and fed the vivid imagination—the faculty which glorifies every great idea, stamps every congenial fact indelibly on the brain, and gives significance to every encounter with the outer world.

There is indeed a solemn contrast between such a life of external calm, so tenacious of first impressions, where each event stands out distinct and tells upon the mind's history, quiet in its intensity, sad in its gravity, self-consuming in its resolute purpose, tragic in its life-long devotion to its own sense of duty, with scarce a break or relief to the brooding, constitutional melancholy—and the whirl of gay existence in life, so called: where no thought can be pursued in the perpetual analysis of transient and trivial sensations; where one emotion drives out another: where incident chases incident, and event, event; where every fresh study obliterates the influence of the last; where new loves make the old cold; where no impression lasts long enough to mould the character and leave its own trace behind. The most thoughtless reader must feel this contrast, and find his interest and curiosity stimulated, and his reason stirred, to discover the influences for good and evil in so exceptional a career as is here presented to him. It may, at least, make him appreciate the happy

cheerfulness of ordinary life, to learn, as we are taught here—

——“how existence may be cherished, Strengthened, and fed, without the aid of joy.”

It is the impressive seriousness of this life that first strikes us; it indeed demands attention, and claims our respect, and even admiration. It reveals such earnestness, such truth according to its own standard, such conscientiousness as far as the perception of duty extends, such habitual self-sacrifice; while side by side with these noble qualities, are defects of equal magnitude, and a result which upsets all previous expectation, and overthrows half our theories. For what is the end of this seemingly chastened will, this abiding sense of a divine presence, this subjugation of the highest pleasures of the intellect to homely duties, this renunciation of the gay trifles which make up the existence of so many of her sex? Not serenity, not purity, not contentment, not hope, not a judgment skilled to discern between good and evil; not a progress from strength to strength, not faith, nor joy and peace in believing—but dimness and deadness to spiritual things, and a clinging to time and sense, and ignorance of the highest purpose of existence, and a low standard of excellence in others, and bitterness of spirit, narrow sympathies, and harsh judgments. Such at least are the misgivings left on our minds after the perusal of this biography, such the doubts and regrets; though it is not impossible that things may be left untold, unknown even to the biographer, known only to the nearest and dearest, which might clear up the gloom and throw a parting gleam over this sad, heavy, and clouded day.

Before, however, we enter upon the consideration of Charlotte Brontë's character, we would impress upon our readers that she was one of a class who have a peculiar claim for consideration and indulgence—those whose minds and bodies are not in harmony, where there is a lasting discrepancy between the spirit and the mortal frame in which it may truly be said to be imprisoned. When these do not *fit*—when the mind is masculine, vigorous, active, keen, and daring, and the body feeble, nervous, suffering under exertion, and sinking always towards its fall—the want of balance is apt to play strange tricks with the whole economy. The mind, unsupported, not allowed to follow out its suggestions and

impulses by physical weakness, and thus condemned to a forced inactivity, becomes often morbid, capricious, or reckless in its workings; for the mind cannot think properly, or use its functions as mere spirit. The body in its turn suffers under the vagaries of its strong, rebellious, irresponsible tenant; it is racked by pains or prostrated by ineffectual powerless efforts to obey—or it throws off the yoke altogether, and refuses to act as interpreter any longer, and sits down in the stolid imbecility of extreme shyness and reserve, a rigid mould, out of which the fiery tenant cannot make itself seen or felt, and so revenges itself by all the more license in its own unthwarted sphere, or settles down into dreams and fancies, preying upon itself. Now, we know that this great trial, wherever it is found, is an appointed one; that there is a way to escape from its temptations, and to turn them into a blessing; but it is not less a duty in all who know no such anguish, who experience no internal strife, whose system is in harmony, who know not what this conflict of uncongenial elements means—to pity those who have all their life to bear the burden and heat of this oppressive day. It behoves them, while thankful for their happier lot, to be indulgent, tender, sympathizing, considerate for those—and they are often the most highly gifted—who are the subjects of a severer dispensation; to make allowances, to be slow to blame, ready to forgive, patient of seeming injustice, tolerant of eccentricity, caprice, and we might almost say, of error—not of error in itself, but in them.

We have spoken of the sensation caused by the present biography, which would have had no common interest had its subject been hitherto unknown; but this is of course indefinitely enhanced by the startling juxtaposition in which it stands, to ordinary readers, with the preconceived conception of what the author of “*Jane Eyre*” must be. The genius and audacity of the story; the shrinking timidity of the writer; the decorous, uneventful simplicity of the life; the bold plunge into the whirl of passion in the novel; the rustic ignorance of the world the one presents; the deep knowledge of man's nature—original, rough, coarse man's nature—in those scenes and interests which remove them farthest from woman's sympathy and observation, found in her works—what every reader seeks to do, is to reconcile this seem-

ing contradiction and unravel the mystery how can so bashful a woman be so unbashful a writer?—and so on.

In the first place, the book proves that those who know least of the world do not always know its best part. The boy at a private tutor's, amongst his two or three companions may find as much bad as in the five hundred boys of a public school; perhaps he may find more: and Charlotte Brontë's small glimpse of the world showed her but an indifferent part of it, and her home held a monster whom the strong ties of an inordinate family affection constrained her to love and care for and find excuses for. Whatever extenuation can be found for want of refinement—for grosser outrages on propriety than this expression indicates—the home and the neighborhood of Charlotte Brontë certainly furnish; she wrote in ignorance of offending public opinion. She thought men habitually talked before women in the way she makes one of them talk; she thought men generally were like, in their principles, practice, and manners, the men she describes. As her eyes were opened her standard rises, till in her last portrait, the eccentric M. Paul, she gives us something really noble and high principled, though in as odd a shape as these fine qualities were ever embodied.

For practical purposes she lived in a less refined age than our own. Her early experience is drawn from a society a hundred years behindhand in these matters. People talked very differently in the days of Richardson from what they do now. He was then regarded as a moralist. Men would justly hesitate to accord that praise if he wrote the same things in our day. She did not know this; and she had a Lovelace in the house with her, in the person of her brother Branwell. So that while she hated low vice for its own sake, and suffered miserably for its consequences, she was sadly and grievously familiar with it, and knew so much worse than she wrote, that she had no conception of offending the delicacy of her readers.

But this is not all; it must be confessed that her sympathies were more with human nature as she saw it than either with ideal perfection or with the same human nature disciplined and held in check by stern principle. She naturally estimated men by their *qualities*, not their principles; and this may be traced not only to circumstances and training, but

to a certain inherent and never-remedied defect of nature and temperament. Her character was essentially unspiritual. No merely natural qualities have any merit in them; an abstract admiration of the ideal and perfect may leave the mere admirer no better than his neighbor; but it is not the less true that a want of this appreciation of an elevated form of goodness is an evil. And this void is felt alike in Charlotte Brontë's religion and imagination—it influences at once her life and works.

As far as it is shown to us in Mrs. Gaskell's Memoir, her actuating religion was *natural* religion. Not that the doctrines of the Gospel were, as far as we see, ever *questioned* by her. Her external life showed a formal submission to them, which we would be the last to undervalue. She went constantly to church—there were family prayers, at which she punctually assisted. She was conscientious, often to the sacrifice of pleasure and convenience, in her attendance at the Sunday-school. No duty of the clergyman's daughter was omitted. She had an intimate acquaintance with the language of Scripture—its words were constantly on her lips, or rather her pen. But all that teaching which connects the Christian's life with the love of Christ, which shows us that we are one with Him, hidden with Him, bought with a price, and therefore no longer our own; that we are risen with Him, and must seek the things *above*—the second birth—the indwelling of the Spirit—mysteries—sacraments—all these heavenly things, as far as the Biography shows us (we are aware that there may not have been any diligent search for them, or quick apprehension of a transient leaning towards the higher spiritual truths), are a dead letter. We do not find that the conception of them ever fairly took hold of her mind, though at one period nervous despondency assumed the religious aspect it frequently does; but we meet with no aspirations after something above human nature—no lifting up of the soul to the Infinite. A sense of divine presence we do find—of a need of God's help, and dependence on Him as of the dread Power on whom our happiness depends, because His awful irresponsible will may at any moment dash the cup from our lips. Of the Deity as a fate to be feared, a Power to be propitiated, a Master to be obeyed, we recognize the influence everywhere

in life and works; seldom surely as a Father and a Friend. And this feeble and low estimate of the Divine nature may explain her very defective notions of the evils of sin. She seems to view sin only on the side of its injury to man; not mainly as an offence against God—God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. It is only, indeed, through the revelation of the Gospel, that sin becomes exceeding sinful—withdrawn from that searching light, it must necessarily be hated solely for the mischief that it does, and the misery it causes. Thus, outrages against God, such as avowed atheism, excite no sense in her of personal wrong. She is seriously grieved when her friend, Miss Martineau, published her infidel book; such speculations depressed her, and made her unhappy. But there is no indignation—she thinks the feeling out of place, and censures it in others. She feels, on the contrary, the general outcry an occasion for showing fidelity in friendship. She regards Miss Martineau as under persecution, because people are angry with her book. She has no jealousy for the honor of God. It may be said, "Wherein does she differ in all this from most writers of fiction?" Our novelists are not, as a class, remarkable for their spiritual views of Christianity; we are generally content with something far short of this. But Miss Bronte is no ordinary writer. There is nothing vague or undefined about her—all her actuating principles influenced her works. She and her works are identical. Her talent lies in analysis, in looking deep down into the heart; and therefore, all wants and omissions are felt to bear fruit. In fact, a powerful mind shows its wants more than weaker ones; the void is felt in proportion to its vigor and fulness in other directions.

The natural affections are her true inspiration—they absorbed all the feeling of her nature: and this again, it may be said, is no unusual idolatry, that we should lay it to the special charge of Miss Bronte. But with her, as we see it in her life, it was no common, self-indulgent creed. Those who knew only her works might so misunderstand her. She has been so misunderstood. But, in fact, it was a worship that demanded continual sacrifices and the sternest self-denial—the dedication of the whole being. What grim idol was ever more inexorable than her cold, damp, dreary home, bare, gray, and desolate, with its churchyard⁹ miasmas and

cheerless bleak solitudes. And her worship of it was much after the servile fashion of idol-worship—if it began in love it ended in fear. She knew it was a prison—she often shuddered over its memories, but she never dreamed of escaping its chains, even when it held her from all that her nature most needed for refreshment and renewal. She regarded the call as a temptation. Her devotion to her father is beyond all praise. We can give no ill names to even an excess of filial virtue. Her love, duty, obedience, and sacrifice of her whole being to him, are indeed the example of the book; and she had the reward of making his happiness, and constituting, while she lived, the joy and pride of his old age. But her love for her brother brought nothing but misery and disgrace; yet, the anguish of disappointed hopes, the intolerable load of shame, the perpetual disgust and degradation, never weaned her affection from him—at least, never so far as to suggest the thought of ridding herself of a burden which most minds of any power would in some way have delivered themselves from, and cast off, as Samson his green withes. Even her sisters, with whom there was congeniality of taste and feeling—where the keen, passionate, almost morbid affection was mutual—how strange and comfortless it sounds in the description—how little did Emily, in her pagan selfishness, reward the love centred upon her. How cautious had Charlotte to be—how fearful of offending that incomprehensible, but half human, temper. How patiently she yielded to her overbearing will; how she submitted without irritation to her sinful folly in illness. How tenderly she held her in memory after death, shutting her eyes to her faults, and dressing her up in all manner of fictitious virtues and graces, in the hope of bringing round the world to her own high estimate. How she longed for her, and bled for her with inward wounds that never healed. Her nature had not in it the element of change; even the servant who had once found a place in the inner sanctum of her heart must hold it, and be tenderly considered and humored, at unheard-of sacrifices of time and convenience. On such questions she could not reason—instinct and a blind sense of duty, with something of the fatalist's resignation, were her guides.

The most engrossing of all human affec-

tions was known only to her imagination (as far, that is, as the reader is concerned); for her engagement and marriage occurred at the close of her history; it formed the interest, not of her actual life, but of that part of it which we see in her books. There she threw herself into it with characteristic intensity. Ordinary readers were led to suspect from the daring with which the subject is treated, that her own heart was susceptible; but we believe that experience would have checked the audacity of her invention, if not stopped it altogether; for, in fact, none of the relations which absorbed and filled her heart are represented in her books. Her heroines, those whose inner sanctuary of feeling is laid bare, are in two cases homeless, and in all fatherless and sisterless: waifs and strays of society with no ties of family or locality. It would seem as if each scene of human feeling must be lived through, either in life or imagination. She was indeed almost willing to confess that the love of children was not in her; but this probably was because it was as yet a mere abstract idea to her. It might have been awakened to tragic power, but it was not the Divine Will that the mother's joys or sorrows should be hers, or we cannot but believe that it, like the rest, would have been a passion self-devoted, blind, idolizing. Friendship stands on quite a different basis in her mind from these *natural* ties. Though very capable of a strong attachment, she had a singular mistrust of it, lest its blandishments should withdraw her from her just allegiance. When intercourse with some congenial mind was absolutely needed for health of mind and body, she would voluntarily refuse it, from the instinctive fear that it might shake the supremacy of home; her instincts were always afraid of it, lest this new influence should attempt to supersede their tyranny. Still it was an influence: between her friends and the world at large there was a mighty gulf; they were removed from the region of abstraction and admitted to be parts of herself; and all things not received in some way into herself were either nothing to her or held in antipathy. Abstract ideas were a mere blank; masses of men and their great interests were such to her. Things and persons must have entered into her brain through her heart, feelings, and sympathies, and been thus incorporated into her own being, for her to

have a judgment upon them, or, we may add, a conscience about them.

There is a perfect fitness between the subject of the present memoir and her biographer. Mrs. Gaskell has done her best, and spared no pains to draw a faithful and true portrait of her friend; using no more artifices or flattering appliances than are fair in all friendly portrait painting, and which consist in giving prominence to the good points and casting a discreet shade over the weak and faulty ones. In some respects, it is indeed a model of biography. She has caught the spirit of her subject; all the accessories are in keeping. The time and labor she has bestowed on the locality tell with striking effect. We feel these strange sisters to be the spirits of the wild scene, so vividly brought before us; and her heroine's genius and virtues gain originality and dignity, and her faults find their readiest excuse in the picturesque peculiarities of her home and training. In spite of an evident desire to sustain a certain romantic tone—to have all in good keeping—we see no reason to question any statement of fact where she has depended on her own judgment. But the case is altogether different where she has implicitly relied on the statements of others in a case where their own wounded feelings were most deeply concerned; there the wish to make the world realize her friend's sorrows and trials has quite upset her sense of justice. We cannot suppose any personal feeling has led Mrs. Gaskell into the great sin and ruinous blunder of her book. We believe it rather to be the fancied duty of using no reserves which could interfere with a full revelation of her heroine's position and circumstances, which she holds to be the cause of all that was faulty in herself or her writings; a false principle which in one case has led her to be as regardless of other reputations as though the persons her story comes in contact with, were mere creatures of the brain. We must believe she has been misled by Miss Brontë's own private account, and trusted her erroneous impression, and published it to the world (in a case where such partial affection as hers must necessarily warp her judgment) so rashly and blindly, as not to take the commonest, simplest, and easiest means to ascertain the truth of the unparalleled charges she was bringing. Even if the strange revolting story could have been

proved in every particular, we should have felt the impropriety of this gratuitous attack. It sounded, at the first reading, something vindictive and revengeful; an unprecedented outrage on feeling and custom, for which there was no sufficient motive. When every word has been retracted on the threat of legal proceedings, when we find that such charges could be brought by one woman against another without due precaution or adequate inquiry, our confidence in Miss Bronte's biographer has received a permanent shock. She has lost ground which she can never regain. We can no longer take any thing for granted; we must test it by our own sense of probability, and form our own independent inferences.

It does not commonly conduce to eminence or distinction in life, of any sort, to have been the victim of crotchets in childhood. Most persons of genius have had an ordinary education according to their class; but Charlotte Bronte stands, at first sight, a signal exception to this rule. She was brought up on what is called a system. Her father took it into his head to train his children on the principles of Day, Rousseau, and those new lights. But when we analyze this system we find its real basis to be *neglect*. His children were, to a most unusual degree, left to themselves. Mr. Bronte, on principle, fed his children exclusively on potatoes; burnt their pretty red shoes, and cut his wife's silk gown into strips,—and therefore takes place amongst the theorists and philosophers: but never was reputation earned at less expense of time and trouble. He had a plan of his own for training children and weaning them from the frivolities of life; but having given his orders we meet with no further interference. Their mother suffered in her long illness alone, or in her husband's company. He dined all his life by himself: the six children ate their potatoes by themselves, and either sat in their "study" (they never had a nursery), where the eldest, just seven years old, read the newspaper and gleaned the political intelligence, or they wandered hand-in-hand to spend hours on the moors. Their bodies were played tricks with, but not their minds. There was no tampering with the intellect—that was left to develop as it might, under nature's influences. Feeble health made them precocious; each child was a phenomenon. They had no notion

of play; they never made a noise; their amusements were intellectual speculation; their interests those of the great outer world, wars and politics, warriors and statesmen. It was an education, so to call it, fatal to that just balance of powers which constitutes happiness, and dangerous to principle; but, considering their peculiar organization, fostering the intellect. Nourishing food, tender maternal watchfulness, the attentions and cares of the nursery, plenty of playthings, and the little lessons said as a task each day, would have made happier and better women; they could afterwards have taken their place in life without shyness or reserve; and the brother might have grown into a man, not sunk, after a boyhood of extraordinary promise, into a brute. But on the mere question of genius we should have missed some of Currer Bell's most vivid scenes; there probably would have been no Currer Bell; nor should we have had in their infancy six little sages rivalling their seven predecessors of Greece. We believe in the substantial truth of the following replies, though they may have received a little finish and point in the recording. The incident of the mask is surely prophetic of the disguise under which the three sisters spoke their utterances to the world, and which was really necessary to their powers of expression. We extract from a letter of Mr. Bronte:—

"When my children were very young, when, as far as I can remember, the oldest was about ten years of age, and the youngest about four, thinking that they knew more than I had yet discovered, in order to make them speak with less timidity, I deemed that if they were put under a sort of cover I might gain my end; and happening to have a mask in the house, I told them all to stand and speak boldly from under cover of the mask.

"I began with the youngest (Anne, afterwards Acton Bell), and asked what a child like her most wanted; she answered, 'Age and experience.' I asked the next (Emily, afterwards Ellis Bell), what I had best do with her brother Branwell, who was sometimes a naughty boy; she answered, 'Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him.' I asked Branwell what was the best way of knowing the difference between the intellects of man and woman; he answered, 'By considering the difference between them as to their bodies.' I then asked Charlotte what was the best book in the world; she answered, 'The Bible.' And

what was the next best; she answered, 'The Book of Nature.' I then asked the next what was the best mode of education for a woman; she answered, 'That which would make her rule her house well.' Lastly, I asked the oldest what was the best mode of spending time; she answered, 'By laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity.' I may not have given precisely their words, but I have nearly done so, as they made a deep and lasting impression on my memory. The substance, however, was exactly what I have stated."—*Life of Charlotte Bronte*, vol. i. pp. 59, 60.

These preternaturally sagacious answers emanated from a semi-cultivation. These girls, so quiet, thoughtful, and demure, as we find them in early youth, were in their secret inner nature untamed, and their cold formal stone-flagged home, where they did housework and obeyed orders, represented their merely bodily docility; the uninclosed, untilled heathery moors, with their becks and hollows, figure the freedom, independence, and wild self-culture of their minds, thinking their own thoughts, forming their own theories, constructing their own creeds. They were as much the offspring of this locality as the nymphs and dryads of mythology, and the hunting fairies of a later age, of whom they constantly remind us in the union of two apparently opposite elements—a sympathy with rude humanity, its homely labors, coarse pleasures and passions, and an intense clinging identification of self with the purer, more evanescent aspects of nature, cloud and moonbeam, rainbow and mountain; but while from this preternatural affinity, seemingly so powerful and free, never really rising beyond earth's attraction, and always hunting the same spot. Charlotte had feelings which connected her with her kind, but we can never think of Emily in life or death as a piece of ordinary humanity; her vehement home-sickness, the inability to exist away from her moors, her deftness at household labors, her savage picture of life in her book, her mastery over brute creatures, her wild unapproachable reserve, her unwillingness to die, as though this life were all, give all the same weird impression. The disembodied spirit, in our fancy, lingers about the scene to which it so passionately clung; it still sobs in the winds and shrieks in the driving wintry rains of those dreary heights.

But our main business is with Charlotte;

and the subject of education, plainly treated, brings us to the delicate and much disputed question of the Cowan Bridge School, to which she was sent at eight years old, for a brief period, and of which she has recorded such bitter experiences as *Jane Eyre*. At eight or nine years old, her habits of observation had no doubt set in. She could form a decided opinion, though not a just judgment, on what she saw; and that opinion would be pretty sure to be an unfavorable and prejudiced one. After her peculiar home-training, we do not doubt that restraint would be irksome, and the presence of numbers overwhelming. Then the very simplicity of her home diet might render her appetite fastidious to school fare and the rough cooking with which it is often served. There seems also no doubt that her elder sister, the object of her warm affection and even reverence, was unkindly treated by one of the teachers; Maria Bronte was not in a state of health to be sent to school at all, and faults, the consequence of bodily languor, were punished with undiscerning severity. The scenes recorded by Mrs. Gaskell, of which others were witness, would rankle in any sister's memory; in Charlotte Bronte they would make an indelible impression and cry for vengeance. She found herself in a scene of dreariness and privation, her soul boiled over at what she thought her sister's ill treatment; the child was not then in a state to estimate Mr. Carus Wilson's really benevolent efforts, and the good intentions and self-sacrifice, which would atone for mistakes to lookers-on. To her he was the head and front of offending; they were *his* rules which pressed so hardly on her, the teacher who tyrannized over her sister acted under his authority. To her he was the veritable "black marble clergyman" she subsequently sculptured forth. Now it is certain that it needs not only good intentions, but a great deal of kindness and practical knowledge of children, to be able to serve them and do them good; it is hardly fair to demand their gratitude for pursuing a bad system towards them, however well meant; and we are disposed to think that in the short period between the establishment of the school, and its re-construction after the fever, the period with which alone Charlotte Bronte is concerned, the system was harsh and the practical management ill conducted; probably little allowance was made

for difference of character, and all were under one stern mechanical rule. But time should at least soften resentments, if it is too much to expect gratitude from the sensitive, keen nature that writhed under this rule; twenty years should not have passed only to find the rapour more poignant, the understanding should not have gained strength only to give force to retaliation, the imagination should not have developed only to invent the most telling weapon with which to inflict a blow; for no direct charge or accusation could have produced the same effect as this irresponsible satire. The author of *Jane Eyre* wrote under a feigned name, ignorant who would read her book, how far it would reach, or if it would ever be taken for earnest—not tied down to fact, and with no other guide or judge but her own impression, to which we fully believe she desired to be faithful. But in this assumed freedom she felt at liberty to interpret every action that displeased her, to give the *thoughts* that had prompted every supercilious word, or harsh tone; to ascribe the motives in words for every austere direction. No one, not she herself, or contemporary pupils, ever heard Mr. Carus Wilson say the things attributed to Mr. Brocklehurst; but she did not think herself unfair so long as she gave what she believed the *true* interpretation, and put thought and action into the language which they must have assumed if reduced to words at all. This is always her plan in writing. Thus if Mr. Wilson even objected to her "hearing" to a substitute being provided for an ill-cooked breakfast, her conscience would feel justified in recording his supposed principles in the following words, which conclude a long harangue.

"O, Madam, when you put bread and cheese instead of burnt porridge into these children's mouths, you may feed their vile bodies, but you little think how you starve their immortal souls!"—*Jane Eyre*, p. 60.

If ever she witnessed, which we have little doubt she did, the contrast between her schoolfellows' enforced plainness of apparel—enforced on religious grounds—and the air of fashion in their censor's own family, she would not hesitate to bring precept and practice in rather startling juxtaposition, as in the following little scene, which comes at the close of a lecture against conformity to the world, and an order for cutting short the hair of all the girls.

"Madam," he pursued "I have a Master to serve, whose kingdom is not of this world; my mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh, and teach them to clothe themselves with shame-facedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel; and each of the young persons before us has a string of hair twisted in plaits which vanity itself might have woven: these, I repeat, must be cut off; think of the time wasted, of"—

"Mr. Brocklehurst was here interrupted. Three other visitors, ladies, entered the room. They ought to have come a little sooner to have heard his lecture on dress, for they were splendidly attired in velvet, silk, and fur. The two younger of the trio (fine girls of sixteen and seventeen) had grey beaver hats, then in fashion, shaded with ostrich plumes, and from under the rim of this graceful head-dress fell a profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled. The elder lady was enveloped in a costly velvet shawl, trimmed with ermine, and she wore a false front of French curls.

"These ladies were deferentially received by Miss Temple as Mrs. and the Misses Brocklehurst, and conducted to seats of honor at the top of the room."—*Ibid.* p. 61.

If exposure and public denunciation was a favorite form of punishment, one indeed most ill suited for the moral training of girls, and terrible to a nervous temperament to endure or even to witness, she would not hesitate to illustrate the system in that ruthless scene, where the hapless child is set on a stool and proclaimed a liar, or to enhance its cruelty by the exquisite contrast of pity and sympathy, delineated in her own sister Maria; thus exhibiting in harshest and most painful force a hard unfeeling system brought to bear on a noble character. Just so far, and no further, we believe this to be a correct representation of the state of things at Cowan bridge; that is, we believe the faults she exposes did all exist in a modified form; her penetration saw what some others did not see, but what was really there. But the unfairness consists not only in dramatic exaggeration, but in the suppression or ignoring of all redeeming points.

In all this, Charlotte Brontë did not feel the responsibilities of authorship, or realize that, while relieving her own feelings and avenging her sister's wrongs, by telling the tale her own way, she was retaliating by the same plan of irresponsible denunciation she had been exposing in her book. Minds so warped by morbid family affection as hers

cannot be fair in judging between their own belongings and strangers, besides that her sense of justice was not as much on the alert as it would have been in making a plain statement. Mrs. Gaskell says—

"Miss Bronte more than once said to me, that she should not have written what she did of Lowood in 'Jane Eyre,' if she had thought the place would have been so immediately identified with Cowan's Bridge, although there was not a word in her account of the institution but what was true at the time when she knew it; she also said that she had not considered it necessary, in a work of fiction, to state every particular with the impartiality that might be required in a court of justice, nor to seek out motives, and make allowances for human failings, as she might have done, if dispassionately analyzing the conduct of those who had the superintendence of the institution. I believe she herself would have been glad of an opportunity to correct the over-strong impression which was made upon the public mind by her vivid picture, though even she, suffering her whole life long, both in heart and body, from the consequences of what happened there, might have been apt, to the last, to take her deep belief in facts for the facts themselves—her conception of truth for the absolute truth."—*Life of Charlotte Bronte*, vol. i. pp. 64, 65.

The apology for unfairness, the excuse, as far as one can be given, for lasting indiscriminating rancor, lies in such scenes as these, for which Mrs. Gaskell has the authority of a fellow pupil.

"One of their fellow-pupils, among other statements even worse, gives me the following:—The dormitory in which Maria slept was a long room, holding a row of narrow little beds on each side, occupied by the pupils; and at the end of this dormitory there was a small bed-chamber opening out of it, appropriated to the use of Miss Scatcherd. Maria's bed stood nearest to the door of this room. One morning, after she had become so seriously unwell as to have had a blister applied to her side (the sore from which was not perfectly healed), when the getting-up bell was heard, poor Maria moaned out that she was so ill, so very ill, she wished she might stop in bed; and some of the girls urged her to do so, and said they would explain it all to Miss Temple, the superintendent. But Miss Scatcherd was close at hand, and her anger would have to be faced before Miss Temple's kind thoughtfulness could interfere; so the sick child began to dress, shivering with cold, as, with-

out leaving her bed, she slowly put on her black worsted stockings over her thin white legs (my informant spoke as if she saw it yet, and her whole face flashed out undying indignation). Just then Miss Scatcherd issued from her room, and without asking for a word of explanation from the sick and frightened girl, she took her by the arm, on the side to which the blister had been applied, and by one vigorous movement whirled her out into the middle of the floor, abusing her all the time for dirty and untidy habits. There she left her. My informant says, Maria hardly spoke, except to beg some of the more indignant girls to be calm; but, in slow, trembling movements, with many a pause, she went down stairs at last,—and was punished for being late."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 73, 74.

It is rather a startling fact, that this poor child was almost at the point of death before her father was informed of her illness. The shock was great when he saw her state; he took her home at once, where she died in a very few days.

The Miss Temple of *Jane Eyre* still lives, and barely remembers Charlotte Bronte as a bright, clever little child; the only period of her life her biographer thinks, in which the epithet "bright" could be applied to her. She was taken from the school soon after nine years old—a standing warning to all concerned with children, to take care what they do before the youngest and smallest: who knows what tenacious memories, what keen sense of injustice, what power and thirst for vengeance, lie there in the germ, hid out of sight or thought, to start into life some day.

At this age, the death of her two elder sisters made her the head of the family, and constituted her the guardian of the two remaining girls, Emily and Anne, the Ellis and Acton Bell of later times. An aunt, their mother's sister, taught them what she knew herself, and the father told them the news, and kept them informed in all public events. Mr. Bronte's plans of education were certainly singular, for while he sent four girls to school at one time, his only son he preferred to keep at home under his own instruction, and dependent for amusement on such intercourse and companionship as he could make for himself in the village; where he soon became so acceptable, that it was the custom of the landlord of the public house to send for "Patrick," as they called him to

entertain every new arrival. After this we need not talk of systems of education. The result surpasses in mischief what might have been expected from it. But in boyhood Branwell shared his sisters' literary tastes and aspirations. They wrote tales, dramas, and poems together. At the age of nineteen he sent one of the latter to Wordsworth, with a request for his judgment expressed in really eloquent terms, and conveying at once a sense of his own powers, and a modest deference to the great poet's award, whatever it might be, which make us grieve the more for the wreck of his later years. The seclusion of their life had an exactly opposite effect on the brother and his sisters; they grew preposterously shy and bound to home; he longed for the world he was shut out from with a sort of mania; he actually studied the map of London, till he knew his way through its labyrinths better than any cockney.

One of the curiosities of the book is a facsimile of Charlotte's handwriting in this first period of composition, distressing to look upon from its extreme minuteness and from the ruinous effect it must have had on her sight, which was always weak. There is something characteristic in this, and in her notion of learning to draw by close imitation of line engraving. We trace something of the same minuteness in her style, and in the labor she bestows on the description of a passing expression, a frown, a glance, a smile. She was feeling her way in the dark to her own especial forte. By fourteen she had written twenty volumes in this microscopic penmanship, of a quality which Mrs. Gaskell answers for as being of singular merit for that age. The variety of subject implies an immense range of thought and interest, and a considerable hero-worship. The Duke of Wellington was her type and ideal of all that was great and noble. Her thoughts, her stories, her fancies, all centred round him. She was a keen politician, a Tory, and a church-woman, in her way. The following passage from one of her stories, written to account for its slow progress, must surely be remarkable writing for the age of thirteen.

"Parliament was opened, and the great Catholic question was brought forward, and the Duke's measures were disclosed, and all was slander, violence, party-spirit, and confu-

sion. O, those six months, from the time of the King's speech to the end! Nobody could write, think, or speak on any subject about the Catholic question, and the Duke of Wellington, and Mr. Peel. I remember the day when the Intelligence Extraordinary came with Mr. Peel's speech in it, containing the terms on which the Catholics were to be let in! With what eagerness Papa tore off the cover, and how we all gathered round him, and with what breathless anxiety we listened, as one by one they were disclosed, and explained, and argued upon so ably, and so well! and then when it was all out, how Aunt said that she thought it was excellent, and that the Catholics could do no harm with such good security! I remember also the doubts as to whether it would pass the House of Lords, and the prophecies that it would not; and when the paper came which was to decide the question, the anxiety was almost dreadful with which we listened to the whole affair: the opening of the doors; the hush; the royal dukes in their robes, and the great duke in green sash and waistcoat; the rising of all the peeresses when he rose; the reading of his speech—Papa saying that his words were like precious gold; and lastly, the majority of one to four (*sic*) in favor of the Bill. But this is a digression." &c. &c. —*Ibid.* p. 92.

In the midst of this intellectual activity she was a busy little housewife, sweeping the rooms, assisting in the cooking, and by turns, playfellow and monitress of her younger sisters and brother; such occupations being, no doubt, of infinite value as a check to mere brain work, which must have been going on amongst them all to a very dangerous extent. In a year or two's time we find her with failing spirits and a tone of melancholy, very sad in the dawn of womanhood. It is at this age that we first have a description of her personal appearance—a point of great importance in the formation of all character, and which greatly influenced hers; for she was painfully and morbidly conscious of plainness of feature, so much so as to suppose herself an object disagreeable to the eyes of strangers: an unfortunate impression which, no doubt, (added to the quaint, homely style of dress it was the father's will to choose for his daughters), had a great deal to do with her shyness. People seldom take up such notions without some foundation; otherwise Mrs. Gaskell's friendly description supported by Richmond's very interesting and intelligent portrait, would lead us to disregard it altogether. But faces which depend upon

intelligence and expression for their good looks are never seen to advantage by their possessors.

"This is perhaps a fitting time to give some personal description of Miss Bronte. In 1831, she was a quiet, thoughtful girl, of nearly fifteen years of age, very small in figure—'stunted' was the word she applied to herself,—but as her limbs and head were in just proportion to the slight, fragile body, no word in ever so slight a degree suggestive of deformity could properly be applied to her; with soft, thick, brown hair, and peculiar eyes, of which I find it difficult to give a description, as they appeared to me in her later life. They were large and well shaped; their color a redish brown; but if the iris was closely examined, it appeared to be composed of a great variety of tints. The usual expression was of quiet, listening intelligence; but now and then, on some just occasion for vivid interest or wholesome indignation, a light would shine out, as if some spiritual lamp had been kindled, which glowed behind these expressive orbs. I never saw the like in any other human creature. As for the rest of her features, they were plain, large, and ill set: but, unless you began to catalogue them, you were hardly aware of the fact, for the eyes and power of the countenance overbalanced every physical defect; the crooked mouth and the large nose were forgotten, and the whole face arrested the attention, and presently attracted all those whom she herself would have cared to attract. Her hands and feet were the smallest I ever saw; when one of the former was placed in mine, it was like the soft touch of a bird in the middle of my palm. The delicate long fingers had a peculiar fineness of sensation, which was one reason why all her handiwork, of whatever kind—writing, sewing, knitting—was so clear in its minuteness. She was remarkably neat in her whole personal attire; but she was dainty as to the fit of her shoes and gloves.

"I can well imagine that the grave serious composure, which, when I knew her, gave her face the dignity of an old Venetian portrait, was no acquisition of later years, but dated from that early age when she found herself in the position of an elder sister to motherless children. But in a girl only just entered on her teens, such an expression would be called (to use a country phrase) 'old-fashioned;' and in 1831, the period of which I now write, we must think of her as a little, set, antiquated girl, very quiet in manners, and very quaint in dress; for besides the influence exerted by her father's ideas concerning the simplicity of attire befitting the wife and daughters of a country clergyman (as evinced in his destruction of

the colored boots and silk gown), her aunt, on whom the duty of dressing her nieces principally devolved, had never been in society since she left Penzance, eight or nine years before, and the Penzance fashions of that day were still dear to her heart."—*Ibid.* pp. 99—101.

In 1831 (she was born in 1816) she was sent again to school at Roe Head, between Leeds and Huddersfield, under the charge of Miss Wooler, who remained her warm friend through life. There, too, she formed a lasting friendship with two of her schoolfellows, and in visiting them at their homes somewhat enlarged the sphere of her observation. The traditions of Roe Head and these family visits furnish amongst them the plot and many of the characters of "Shirley," where, our readers will remember, there figure many rich and original specimens of Yorkshire life. Scarcely any of her characters are simply ideal; she had a real model for most of them; and the family of one of these schoolfellows seems to have been reproduced entire, as "the Yorke Family" in "Shirley," not at all, as far as we are led to judge, to their annoyance. In an interval between being a pupil and returning as a teacher to Miss Wooler's, we find her a young instructress of her younger sisters, spending the day in what she calls a delightful, though somewhat monotonous course of lessons, reading, drawing, needlework, and household duties. Their walks always—except when diverted to the circulating library, four miles off—in the same direction, upwards towards "the purple black moors;" for their shyness kept them aloof from the village. "They were shy," we are told, "of meeting even familiar faces, and scrupulous about entering the house of the poorest uninvited. They were steady teachers in the Sunday-school, a habit which Charlotte kept up very faithfully;" but they never faced their kind voluntarily, and always preferred the solitude and freedom of the moors.

The school friend, whose correspondence furnishes most of Charlotte Bronte's early letters, records her first visit to Haworth, and the impression this singular family made on her. All were very clever, original, and utterly different from any people or family she had ever seen before. There was individuality in the whole group, even to Tabby the servant, fidelity towards whom cost our heroine such constant sacrifices. She was struck with the

extraordinary shyness of the sisters, and especially Emily's extreme reserve. Mrs. Gaskell discriminates between these two affections, saying that the one—shyness—would please if it knew how, whereas reserve is indifferent whether it pleases or not. We think, however, the quality was the same in kind, though different in degree. Charlotte did not care to be agreeable to any but congenial spirits; while Emily found no congenial spirits out of her own confined circle. Carried to the excess which we see it, in both these sisters, it is scarcely compatible with an amiable disposition. It belonged to a nature which could not be softened by mere social intercourse apart from direct congeniality. Charlotte never fraternised with general society, or felt under obligations to it, or hesitated to make a simple business-like use of it. She could even lampoon the guests at her father's house, as in the notable case of the curates who figure in "Shirley," and who are avowedly real men, moving in her own circle of acquaintance, as far as she had one. No open, frank, cordial nature could have done this—one that welcomes the guest because he is a neighbor, and feels the force of that gentle tie. Mere inevitable acquaintanceship was no tie to this at once repellant and observant intellect, which treated men as pictures, holding them at arm's length to study them the better. With such feelings towards her species, no wonder she mistrusted them in return, and looked for criticism, and feared harsh construction, and felt timid, awkward, and constrained in their presence. It is true that of society, such as it is understood in more civilized parts of the world, she had small experience, and the rough manners and tempers Mrs. Gaskell describes as indigenous to that district may have inflicted some rude shocks on her young, sensitive mind, and thrown it back upon itself. But all the sisters were more or less impervious to new impressions, and in some mysterious way the slaves of association, which we suppose is one characteristic of reserve. Perhaps under any education their minds would have shown remarkable tenacity to early habit, and resistance to new influences; but, fostered and strengthened by retirement, natural peculiarity gained strength, and became a tyrant. The contrast we have before noted, the antagonism, so to say, between mind and body, is certain to have ministered to their

reserve or shyness: the consciousness that externals did not do them justice, that their minds spoke through unworthy forms. We do not mean mere want of beauty, but circumstances were all against a gracious expansion of nature. Their life had no spring, no sweet budding time of hope and joy. The sap that should have blossomed in leaf and flower formed into knots and excrescences strong and enduring, but presenting no fair show. For this cause they were, perhaps, thrown unwholesomely upon each other for love and sympathy.

The subject of reserve naturally leads us to meditate on the nature and purposes of family affection, and the ties of blood. Every affection with which we are endowed has a use, and tends to the general good. They are all designed for the common weal; the closest, most secret, and intimate domestic relation has, we need not say, a public end. If it does not serve some public use, it is a failure. If a husband's love for his wife does not make him a better citizen, it does him harm, and is a perverted gift. Now, there is a sort of family affection that chills men's wider sympathies, and blinds them to their affinity with the great human family. Our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, are given us to teach us a universal sense of kindred and benevolence. Where we find, instead of this lesson, an opposite impulse is induced—an impulse of separation and exclusion—then we may be sure that family affection has been warped by some selfish and injurious influence, and has failed in the work it was designed to do. Now the mutual affection of the Brontë family was of this sort. We would wish to speak indulgently, respectfully, and even admiringly, of the rare example of sisterly love which this book exhibits; but we cannot doubt that there was error in its exclusiveness, which produced as all error will, bitter fruit. Emily seems to have embodied in herself the extreme evil of whatever was wrong in this sentiment. In this great world of fellow-creatures, sprung from the same source, bound to the same goal, guided by the same hopes and fears, influenced by the same great motives, instincts, and passions, she could endure the companionship of scarcely half a dozen living things; all beside were intolerable to her. So far from giving others her confidence and sympathy, she could not bear

their presence. Except her two sisters, her father, her abominable brother, the old household servant, and the dog, she had no voluntary intercourse with living thing; and even with these favored few, though she could not exist away from them, though the sight and sound of them was, in some way, as necessary to her being as the air she breathed, yet she neither seems to have studied their comfort, nor returned their confidence; this mighty craving love ended in utter dogged rejection of even their sympathy. Because it was perverted from its proper end it recoiled upon itself. Of course this is a monstrous extreme; but the fault, in a degree, is no uncommon one, and the use of extremes is to furnish pointed lessons.

Charlotte Bronte, however, could add friendship to this absorbing feeling, as her letters show, though they exhibit a strange mistrust for one so young in the stability of the tie. Even as a girl she was without hope, and felt herself so little in harmony with the world, its pleasures, its bustle, its splendor, that any contact with it she expected to alienate from herself. In truth, the distant life of stirring incident, grand spectacles, and historical associations, had a powerful influence on her imagination and intellect, though she was afraid of it, and felt herself cut off from it. In the midst of her shyness, we see an unusual confidence in her own judgment as to what was worthy of her curiosity. She had no false shame, such as rusticity often feels—she warns her friend on her first visit to London against it. The girl of seventeen or eighteen writes:

"Haworth, Feb. 20, 1834.

"Your letter gave me real and heartfelt pleasure, mingled with no small share of astonishment. Mary had previously informed me of your departure for London, and I had not ventured to calculate on any communication from you while surrounded by the splendors and novelties of that great city, which has been called the mercantile metropolis of Europe. Judging from human nature, I thought that a little country girl, for the first time in a situation so well calculated to excite curiosity, and to distract attention, would lose all remembrance, for a time at least, of distant and familiar objects, and give herself up entirely to the fascination of those scenes which were then presented to her view. Your kind, interesting, and most welcome epistle showed me, however, that I had been both mistaken and uncharitable in

these suppositions. I was greatly amused at the tone of nonchalance which you assumed, while treating of London and its wonders. Did you not feel awed while gazing at St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey? Had you no feeling of intense and ardent interest, when in St. James' you saw the palace where so many of England's kings have held their courts, and beheld the representations of their persons on the walls? You should not be too much afraid of appearing *country-bred*; the magnificence of London has drawn exclamations of astonishment from travelled men, experienced in the world, its wonders and beauties. Have you yet seen anything of the great personages whom the sitting of Parliament now detains in London—the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Earl Grey, Mr. Stanley, Mr. O'Connell? If I were you, I would not be too anxious to spend my time in reading whilst in town."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 135, 136.

A want of the faculty of hearty surprise is a sign with her of a weak character: in "*Villette*" we find it ascribed to the selfish school girl. "who must have had good blood in her veins, for never was any duchess more perfectly, radically, unaffectedly, *nonchalante* than she; a weak, transient amaze was all she knew of the sensation of wonder."

When the friend returns from London, she is greeted with congratulations at her unshaken constancy; the letter is curious as showing that the habit of scrutinizing observation had set in. We see what was the basis of her knowledge of human nature; not only that unreasoning instinct which enables men to act in society, but careful study, which stands in the way of free personal intercourse, but without which there can be no successful delineation of character.

"June 19th.

"MY own DEAR E.,

"I may rightfully and truly call you so now. You have returned or are returning from London—from the great city which is to me as apocryphal as Babylon, or Nineveh, or ancient Rome. You are withdrawing from the world (as it is called), and bringing with you—if your letters enable me to form a correct judgment—a heart as unsophisticated, as natural, as true, as that you carried there. I am slow, *very* slow, to believe the protestations of another; I know my own sentiments, I can read my own mind, but the minds of the rest of man and woman kind are to me sealed volumes, hieroglyphical scrolls, which I cannot easily either unseal or decipher. Yet time, careful study, long acquaintance, overcome most difficulties; and, in your case,

I think they have succeeded well in bringing to light and construing that hidden language, whose turnings, windings, inconsistencies, and obscurities, so frequently baffle the researches of the honest observer of human nature. . . . I am truly grateful for your mindfulness of so obscure a person as myself, and I hope the pleasure is not altogether selfish; I trust it is partly derived from the consciousness that my friend's character is of a higher, a more steadfast order than I was once perfectly aware of. Few girls would have done as you have done—would have beheld the glare, and glitter, and dazzling display of London with dispositions so unchanged, heart so uncontaminated. I see no affectation in your letters, no trifling, no frivolous contempt of plain, and weak admiration of showy persons and things."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 137, 138.

At this period, by the way, we observe a propensity to the use of long words; no bad sign in youth and inexperience, whatever it may be afterwards. Long words are a stage which we fancy every good style has passed through. After an interval of home she became teacher in Miss Wooler's school; Emily Bronte undertook a similar situation amongst strangers, and suffered frightfully in the uncongenial labor, which, after a few months, was discontinued. Poor Charlotte, on her side, sank into low spirits, and became a victim to nervous terrors, under which it was sad to see her pursuing her labor, with a morbid perseverance which would not permit her to accept of relaxation. She writes penitential letters to her friend about her miserable touchiness of character; and is evidently passing through another stage of those trials by which her intellect was forming itself for its work, at the cost of all the light-heartedness of youth.

Whatever religious experiences are communicated to the reader belong to this period of life, and are met with in her correspondence with this schoolfellow, who, we presume, sought to lead her mind in its distress to seek rest in religion. Charlotte's replies are in a strain which seem to tell of some temporary excitement with which her state of nerves had probably to do. It stands not only apart, but at variance with the tone of later life. We meet with no recurrence of thoughts, like these; the impression seemed to pass away and leave no trace; and yet they are impassioned and striking words from such a source, and awaken pity and sympathy.

"May 10, 1836.

"I was struck with the note you sent me with the umbrella; it showed a degree of interest in my concerns which I have no right to expect from any earthly creature. I won't play the hypocrite; I won't answer your kind, gentle, friendly questions in the way you wish me to. Don't deceive yourself by imagining I have a bit of real goodness about me. My darling, if I were like you, I should have my face Zion-ward, though prejudice and error might occasionally fling a mist over the glorious vision before me—but *I am not like you*. If you knew my thoughts, the dreams that absorb me, and the fiery imagination that at times eats me up, and makes me feel society, as it is, wretchedly insipid, you would pity and I dare say despise me. But I know the treasures of the *Bible*; I love and adore them. I can see the Well of Life in all its clearness and brightness; but when I stoop down to drink of the pure waters they fly from my lips as if I were Tantalus."—*Ibid.* vol. i. p. 154.

And again,—

"My dear dear E.—I am at this moment trembling all over with excitement, after reading your note; it is what I never received before—it is the unrestrained pouring out of a warm, gentle, generous heart. . . . I thank you with energy for this kindness. I will no longer shrink from answering your questions. I do wish to be better than I am. I pray fervently sometimes to be so. I have stings of conscience, visitings of remorse, glimpses of holy, of inexpressible things, which formerly I used to be a stranger to; it may all die away, and I may be in utter midnight, but I implore a merciful Redeemer, that, if this be the dawn of the gospel, it may still brighten to perfect day. Do not mistake me—do not think I am good; I only wish to be so. I only hate my former flippancy and forwardness. O! I am no better than ever I was. I am in that state of horrid, gloomy uncertainty that, at this moment, I would submit to be old, gray-haired, to have passed all my youthful days of enjoyment, and to be settling on the verge of the grave, if I could only thereby ensure the prospect of reconciliation to God, and redemption through his Son's merits. I never was exactly careless in these matters, but I have always taken a clouded and repulsive view of them; and now, if possible, the clouds are gathering darker, and a more oppressive despondency weighs on my spirits. You have cheered me, my darling; for one moment, for an atom of time, I thought I might call you my own sister in the spirit; but the excitement is past, and I am now as wretched

and hopeless as ever. This very night I will pray as you wish me. May the Almighty hear me compassionately! and I humbly hope he will, for you will strengthen my polluted petitions with your own pure requests. All is bustle and confusion round me, the ladies pressing with their sums and their lessons. . . . If you love me, *do, do, do* come on Friday: I shall watch and wait for you, and if you disappoint me I shall weep."—*Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 155—157.

At this time, too, she reads religious biographies, is "fascinated" by Legh Richmond's domestic portraiture, and exhorts her friend to read the life of Wilberforce by his sons. A little further on we come again to the same dependency.

"If I could always live with you, and daily read the Bible with you—if your lips and mine could at the same time drink the same draught, from the same pure fountain of mercy—I hope, I trust, I might one day become better, far better than my evil, wandering thoughts, my corrupt heart, cold to the spirit and warm to the flesh, will now permit me to be. I often plan the pleasant life which we might lead together, strengthening each other in that power of self-denial, that hallowed and growing devotion, which the first saints of God often attained to. My eyes fill with tears when I contrast the bliss of such a state, brightened by hopes of the future, with the melancholy state I now live in, uncertain that I ever felt true contrition, wandering in thought and deed, longing for holiness, which I shall *never never* obtain, smitten at times to the heart with the conviction that ghastly Calvinistic doctrines are true—darkened, in short, by the very shadows of spiritual death.—If Christian perfection be necessary to salvation, I shall never be saved; my heart is a very hot-bed for sinful thoughts, and when I decide on an action I scarcely remember to look to my Redeemer for direction. I know not how to pray; I cannot bend my life to the grand end of doing good; I go on constantly seeking my own pleasure, pursuing the gratification of my own desires. I forget God, and will not God forget me? And, meantime, I know the greatness of Jehovah; I acknowledge the perfection of His word; I adore the purity of the Christian faith; my theory is right, my practice horribly wrong."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 177, 178.

We would not throw any doubt on the language of true contrition; but here, surely, it is the *nerves* rather than the unexcited heart or conscience that speak.

It might be guessed beforehand that these sisters would be indifferently fitted by dispo-

sition and habit for the position of governess. Charlotte tried it with ill enough success; an her experience is added to that of some score others, proving the vulgar selfishness of wealth, and that dark side of respectable human nature which, she says, only a governess can realize. We own we do not attach much weight to her gloomy picture of this state of existence. When she says, writing to Emily Bronte, "You may imagine the miseries of a reserved wretch like me, thrown at once into the midst of a large family—proud as peacocks and wealthy as Jews—at a time when they were particularly gay—when the house was filled with company—all strangers, whose faces I had never seen before!" We can guess all the rest. A mutual dislike would spring up on the spot; It is the nature of reserved (which are, as we have said, exclusive) minds to take unfair views of persons outside themselves; those whom they admit into their inner sanctum are unduly exalted; because a certain selfishness pleases itself in setting up the object of *their* love on an undue eminence, while those outside this paradise are cold, dull, stupid, vulgar, or whatever is the last form of degradation and disparagement in their minds. We do not doubt that Miss Bronte was repulsive to the ladies in whose house she served. The cold, reserved, victim-like way in which she would perform her duties would be irritating. The very saying, "What, love the governess, my dear!"—which will possibly pass into a by-word of that cruelty and want of feeling of which a woman may be guilty—*may* admit of a different interpretation. It may not have expressed contempt of a dependent condition, of intellect and cultivation condemned to serve wealth for hire; but simply that the good lady had not the manners to repress her astonishment that her child should love any thing so unlovable as the governess showed herself to her. We are not saying that the position of governess, in many instances, is not most trying to health, spirits, and temper, but that in Miss Bronte's case there were faults in herself which would certainly aggravate the evil indefinitely, and separate her case from ordinary experience. The state of her own feelings is well described in the following passage, which we think, throws some light upon the real state of things.

"I have striven hard to be pleased with

my new situation. The country, the house, and the grounds are, as I have said, divine; but, alack-a-day! there is such a thing as seeing all beautiful around you—pleasant woods, white paths, green lawns, and blue sunshiny sky—and not having a free moment or a free thought left to enjoy them. The children are constantly with me. As for correcting them, I quickly found that was out of the question: they are to do as they like. A complaint to the mother only brings black looks on myself, and unjust, partial excuses to screen the children. I have tried that plan once, and succeeded so notably, I shall try no more. I said in my last letter that Mrs. — did not know me. I now begin to find she does not intend to know me; that she cares nothing about me, except to contrive how the greatest possible quantity of labor may be got out of me; and to that end she overwhelms me with oceans of needlework; yards of cambric to hem, muslin nightcaps to make, and, above all things, dolls to dress. I do not think she likes me at all, because I can't help being shy in such an entirely novel scene, surrounded as I have hitherto been by strange and constantly changing faces. . . . I used to think I should like to be in the stir of grand folks' society; but I have had enough of it—it is dreary work to look on and listen. I see more clearly than I have ever done before, that a private governess has no existence, is not considered as a living rational being, except as connected with the wearisome duties she has to fulfil."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 191, 192.

Wherever the fault lay, it is clear she never once let her heart go out towards these people; she suffered at the time and pondered over her wrongs, some of which at least read like real ones, studied her oppressors and impaled them all in her books. The "gay company" are, no doubt, that swan-like bevy of fine ladies whose entrance is so well pictured in 'Jane Eyre.' The mother of her pupils we might fancy Mrs. Reed, aggravated in her deformity as her unloving portraits always are—and her own feelings through it all are Jane Eyre's. Under unkindness, we can well fancy that the imagination would indemnify itself by picturing circumstances which might brighten up so dreary an existence, and give the neglected governess a part to play and interests of her own, even more bright and flattering than those she witnessed. It was a part of her life which, though lasting but a little while, strengthened and gave direction to her powers. Though her heart slept amongst strangers, her observation kindled

in the new field, and her imagination was stimulated to frame itself a home far away from the disagreeable present, though suggested by it. While we cannot but reflect upon this habit of making her social experiences minister with so little disguise to the demands of her genius, we must not forget to admire the voluntary self-sacrifice in undertaking such irksome employment for the purpose of relieving the family purse and aiding in the establishment of her brother—considerations all powerful with Charlotte, and duties from which she never shrank. Emily Bronte really tried to do the same; having once failed to endure school existence as a pupil, she tried it again as teacher, with the same success.

"Emily—that free, wild, untameable spirit, never happy nor well but on the sweeping moors that gathered round her home—that hater of strangers, doomed to live amongst them, and not merely to live but to slave in their service—what Charlotte could have borne patiently for herself, she could not bear for her sister."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 160, 161.

It would not do. It was settled that Emily must be the one to stay at home, where she shrank from no labor, made all the bread for the family, and learnt German in the kitchen while it rose.

Coming in amidst these school and governess experiences we have some characteristic home scenes. While all the sisters happened to be at home, Tabby, the old servant, broke her leg. She was at this time nearer seventy than sixty, and the prudent aunt urged on Mr. Bronte the wisdom of removing her to her sister's in the village, attending upon her there, and finding a substitute more helpful and vigorous. There would have been no hardship in this, for Tabby had saved a competency for her rank of life. It was clearly the thing to do—the best for all parties. But the sisters in their narrow, short-sighted sense of duty thought otherwise.

"Miss Branwell urged her views upon Mr. Bronte as soon as the immediate danger to the old servant's life was over. He refused at first to listen to the careful advice; it was repugnant to his liberal nature. But Miss Branwell persevered; urged economical motives; pressed on his love for his daughters. He gave way. Tabby was to be removed to her sister's, and there nursed and cared for, Mr. Bronte coming in with his aid when her own resources fell short. This decision was communicated to the girls. There were

symptoms of a quiet, but sturdy rebellion, that winter afternoon, in the small precincts of Haworth Parsonage. They made one unanimous and stiff remonstrance. Tabby had tended them in childhood; they, and none other, should tend her in her infirmity and age. At tea-time, they were sad and silent, and the meal went away untouched by any of the three. So it was at breakfast; they did not waste many words on the subject, but each word they did utter was weighty. They "struck" eating till the resolution was rescinded, and Tabby was allowed to remain a helpless invalid entirely dependent upon them. Herein was a strong feeling of Duty being paramount to Pleasure, which lay at the foundation of Charlotte's character, made most apparent; for we have seen how she yearned for her friends company; but it was to be obtained only by shrinking from what she esteemed right, and that she never did, whatever might be the sacrifice."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 181, 182.

Of course it was not really *right*, though we respect the scruple that thought it so at the expense of a pleasure. But it was their characteristic to drive a *few* duties into extremes, which can never be done without casting *all* the rest into shade and oblivion. This "Tabby," in the end, became one of the shadows of the house, because she was in her wrong place. In the village, as a humble friend to be visited, she would have been useful. The habit of attention to her would have loosened the terrible coil of reserve which bound and restricted them all. In the house she was an unmitigated evil, filling an office for which she grew more and more unfit; troublesome, jealous, exacting—fostering their most unhappy family peculiarities. When Charlotte Bronte found herself desolate and alone, this old woman of ninety was a hindrance to congenial society. Her time was taken up in the commonest drudgery, secretly supplying her deficiencies of service, lest she should be made aware of the truth that her days of useful labor were over. She had to take her out upon the moors to shout family secrets into her ears, because she resented concealments, and was too deaf for confidences within walls. And how was Tabby the better for all this sacrifice of friends, comfort, cheerfulness, time, and general usefulness in her exclusive service? In no one respect; we do not doubt it did her a great deal of harm. It is the useless, fruitless, indolent, self-sacrifices of this life which are amongst its most impor-

tant lessons and warnings. We say *indolent*, because they were made in obedience to temperament and instinct, and in despite of reason. But we shall have more to say on this head, and a more signal example to bring forward.

This same chapter is remarkable for two incidents generally thought important in the life of a young lady, and characteristically treated by Miss Bronte. In spite of her deficiency in personal beauty, she could inspire both admiration and attachment. While visiting at the house of her friend she received an offer of marriage from a clergyman, which she thus comments upon. She is now three-and-twenty:—

"March 12, 1839.

.... "I had a kindly leaning towards him, because he is an amiable and well-disposed man. Yet I had not, and could not have, that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him; and if ever I marry, it must be in that light of adoration that I will regard my husband. Ten to one I shall never have the chance again; but *n'importe*. Moreover, I was aware that he knew so little of me he could hardly be conscious to whom he was writing. Why! it would startle him to see me in my natural home character; he would think I was a wild, romantic enthusiast indeed. I could not sit all day long making a grave face before my husband. I would laugh, and satirize, and say whatever came into my head first. And if he were a clever man, and loved me, the whole world, weighed in the balance against his smallest wish, should be as light as air."

"So that her first proposal of marriage was quietly declined and put on one side. Matrimony did not enter into the scheme of her life; but good, sound, earnest labor did."—*Ibid.* p. 186.

The motives which influenced her rejection are drawn out at length in "Jane Eyre" with the truth and force which we now see were the fruits of experience. It is often sad to see a woman's nature checked and half its powers wasted, even in a marriage of affection, where the tastes are uncongenial. This gentleman and the incident of his offer suggests the St. John of "Jane Eyre." There was probably something unimpassioned in his manner of making the proposal which furnished food for speculation. We see that her own heart would not interfere with the free exercise of the intellect on an occasion usually so confusing and embarrassing. The

imagination was free to construct a character from this one exhibition. She had, in fact, an ideal which no reality could come up to, and which kept her cool. Marriage she believed ought to bring the highest happiness. She despised every thing short of this; and the considerations which influence tenderer or weaker characters were powerless with her. Neither sordid temptations nor gratitude weighed with her one feather. The next proposal finds her equally unimpressible. It came from one of the race of curates who began at that time to "revolve around Haworth," and was the consequence of one evening's lively conversation; for she explains to her friend:—

"At home, you know, I talk with ease, and am never shy—never weighed down and oppressed by that miserable *mauvaise honte* which torments and constrains me elsewhere."
—*Ibid.* p. 198.

She seems to have regarded the letter, expressed in ardent language which followed, as a piece of impertinence, which it probably was; instead of moving her gratitude, the circumstance probably enhanced her sense of antagonism against the whole class. This gentleman also went down in her books; at least the fact of his being an Irishman, and the Malone of "Shirley," figuring in the character of suitor, seems to identify him—though it is not for the interest of courtship and matrimony to suppose that a woman can really be so cold-blooded, so little sensible to the homage paid to her attractions, as to make capital (as the Americans say) of her own conquests, and turn them into the hard coin of rich scenes and ridiculous situations.

Her tendency, we always observe, is to exaggerate in her books her own first unfavorable impression. She understood her art too well to put living persons as they stood into her books, but some real character was the germ, and recognizable germ, of her feigned ones; and, if her prejudices were at work, often suffered rudely under the process. Exaggeration is in this case her only attempt at disguise. The feeling settles, hardens with time, and develops out of a lively, not indulgent picture of peculiarities, into hard satire and unsympathising contempt. We can hardly recognize her first notice of these worthies: "Mr. W., delivering a noble, eloquent, High Church, apostolical discourse, in which he banged the dissenters fearlessly and

unflinchingly:" and Mr. C., "who did not rant, who did not cant, who did not whine, who did not sniggle, but who just got up and spoke with the boldness of a man who was impressed with the truth of what he was saying, whose sermon she listened to for an hour and yet was sorry when it was done"—for the Malone, Donne, and Sweeting, who make so conspicuous, and amusing, and ridiculous a figure in "Shirley," with whom we are told we must identify them. Here, while she says her conscience will not allow her to be "Hookist or Puseyite," she admires the noble integrity which dictated a fearless opposition to a strong antagonist—in her book she represents them as incapable of thought on any subject—as spending their whole time in an absurd round of visits to one another—in disputing on the most puerile questions of externals; weak, gossiping, or venomous triflers, whose interests were beneath the inquiry of a rational being. But time never softened a difference or a prejudice in Miss Bronte; it hardened dislike into antipathy—opposition into rancor. And she makes attack on these gentlemen in "Shirley" quite deliberately; she even expects her opening chapter to be objected to, but defends it as being as true as the Bible. She never denies that her three notable curates are her living neighbors, and so far from meeting with apology or redress from herself or her biographer, Mrs. Gaskell contemns these gentlemen for making a joke of their peculiar position, and Miss Bronte thinks herself ill-used because they avenged themselves for her gratuitous onslaught by jestingly alluding to her attack as she entertained the Bishop and themselves at her father's table. Of course the whole affair sounds odd to southern ears, and betrays a state of society at variance with our ideas.

But we are anticipating the period of authorship, which at this time was not a fact but an aspiration. These sisters had early conceived the ambition of being heard and felt beyond their own narrow circle. Cut off by constitution and circumstances from the pleasures and distinctions natural to their age, and yet conscious of power—which cannot be felt without a longing for its exercise—to invent, to write, and to print, were inevitable ideas. The habit of "making out," as they called it, i.e., letting the imagination loose to devise plots and scenes, had been

theirs from childhood. They had long indulged these notions and discussed these fancies, at the one period of the day when, casting aside household cares and restraints, they assumed their own wild natures, and thought their natural thoughts.

"It was the household custom among these girls to sew till nine o'clock at night. At that hour Miss Branwell generally went to bed, and her nieces' duties for the day were accounted done. They put away their work, and began to pace the room backwards and forwards; up and down,—as often with the candles extinguished, for economy's sake, as not,—their figures glancing into the fire-light, and out into the shadow, perpetually. At this time, they talked over past cares, and troubles; they planned for the future, and consulted each other as to their plans. In after years this was the time for discussing together the plots of their novels. And again, still later, this was the time for the last surviving sister to walk alone, from old accustomed habit, round and round the desolate room, thinking sadly upon the 'days that were no more.'"*Ibid.* p. 161.

Poetry is commonly the first serious literary effort of young minds. There is something in verse which covers obvious deficiencies and dictates a mould for thought. It is a dress for shivering, doubting, uncertain bashful ideas. These sisters therefore wrote poetry, and had a "modest confidence" that they had achieved success, but feared to trust each other's partial praise. In this mixture of confidence and misgiving, Charlotte conceived the bold idea of writing to Southey, and asking his opinion. Her letter is not in being, but his answer, which came weeks after all hope for one was relinquished, is a model of kind and good advice on the general question of female authorship. He answers her as a writer of *tolerable* verses. He could not foresee her peculiar power in another department of literature, or he would have applied himself rather to the right direction than to the suppression of her gift. It is a question—in women as well as men—of power. Facility many a woman has (he gives Charlotte Brontë credit for this, and no more), and it is well to discourage an ambition prompted merely by ease in writing and rapid flow of ordinary ideas. To such it is well to say, "Literature cannot be the business of woman's life, and it ought not to be;" but a vivid imagination and a forcible style—be they gift of man or woman—are given them

for use. They are responsibilities which are alike abused by misuse or slothful neglect; therefore, while we commend the letter, we excuse Miss Brontë for not eventually acting upon it. Her first impulse was absolute acquiescence. She replied at once in a grateful strain; gives him a little sketch of her life and education, and concludes,—

"Once more allow me to thank you with sincere gratitude. I trust I shall never more feel ambitious to see my name in print—if the wish should rise I'll look at Southey's letter, and suppress it. It is honor enough for me that I have written to him, and received an answer. That letter is consecrated; no one shall ever see it but papa and my brother and sisters. Again I thank you. This incident, I suppose, will be renewed no more; if I live to be an old woman, I shall remember it thirty years hence as a bright dream. The signature which you suspected of being fictitious is my real name. Again, therefore, I must sign myself, C. BRONTË."*Ibid.* vol. i. p. 174.

Southey replies by giving her a friendly invitation, should she ever visit the Lakes. Years after, when she did visit them, she was an acknowledged authoress, in the society of another equally well known and successful, her friend and biographer; but Southey no longer lived to compare the abstract wisdom of his counsels with their adaptation to the particular instance in point. To both ladies he might have offered some stringent criticisms; to neither of them would he have shown such blindness and disregard to genius, as to say, "Do not write at all; your sphere of duty lies elsewhere." For a little while Charlotte had no other thought but submission. She resigned herself to governess life, "which she hates and abhors;" and, in the meanwhile, feels herself in paradise "so long as she can black-lead the stoves, make the beds, and sweep the floors at home, which she prefers to living a fine lady anywhere else."

These rugged household labors, uninviting as they sound, no doubt supplied the place of relaxation to these sisters. As children, they could not play; as women, they were alike alienated by taste and circumstances from the amusements of society. What are called trifles found no entrance into their minds. Their father nipped these vanities in the bud, and with it the cheerful power, which lies in woman's nature, of extracting and im-

parting pleasure from little things—exercising wit and ingenuity on airy nothings—and surrounding themselves with an atmosphere of cheerfulness, which can be felt and enjoyed, but not analyzed. All this was out of their sphere; they could play and sport no more now than as little girls. But no minds can always work and “make out;” and when wearied with such efforts any exercise for the body would be welcome.

She presently resigns herself to the dreaded necessity, and enters on another situation, where she realizes that, in the most favorable circumstances, such a life is not tolerable to her. The perpetual small occupations, the never-ending calls on her time, the constant subjection to another's will, and, above all, the want of leisure to pursue any train of thought, and the consequent languishing of the imagination made up a life of perpetual strain and resistance to the demands of her nature. Moreover, she knew nothing of children. She had never been a child herself—she could not sympathize with her charges; and added to all this, was the having to “live in other people's houses,” which to her was the ascending “*altrui scale*,” the worst feature of Dante's banishment. She grew anxious, and with too much reason, about her youngest pet sister Anne's health, and longed to be with her. These things, together, led to the determination to attempt a school on their own account; and in order to carry out this plan with success, it was resolved that she and Emily should place themselves at a school in Brussels, to perfect themselves in French. The first part of the scheme was carried out; its purpose and object fell to the ground, or rather changed into furnishing materials and groundwork for her subsequent third and last novel, “*Villette*.” The sisters seem to have made a sensation in the school by their industry and ready talent; and Emily, while she stayed, not less by her sullen reserve. M. Héger, husband of the lady at the head of the establishment, and whom we suspect to be the germ of M. Paul Emanuel, observing Charlotte's capacity, gave, in the course of his systematic instruction in French composition, very valuable lessons in the art of composition in any language, by which we have no doubt her style profited. But the banishment from country and home brought on unusual depression. She endured, in the *grandes vacances*, just such nervous miseries

as are described in her novel. She was haunted by bad news from home (by which might generally be understood the excesses of her brother Branwell), and her father had fears of becoming blind. No discouraging reports, however, could allay the thirst for old haunts and familiar faces. She writes to Emily, who is at home again:

“Dec. 1, 1843.

“This is Sunday morning. They are at their idolatrous ‘messe,’ and I am here, that is, in the Refectoire. I should like uncommonly to be in the dining-room at home, or in the kitchen, or in the back kitchen. I should like even to be cutting up the hash, with the clerk and some register people at the other table, and you standing by, watching that I put enough flour, not too much pepper, and, above all, that I save the best pieces of the leg of mutton for Tiger and Keeper, the first of which personages would be jumping about the dish and carving-knife, and the latter standing like a devouring flame on the kitchen-floor. To complete the picture, Tabby blowing the fire, in order to boil the potatoes to a sort of vegetable glue! How divine are these recollections to me at this moment! . . . Tell me whether papa really wants me very much to come home, and whether you do likewise. I have an idea that I should be of no use there—a sort of aged person upon the parish. I pray with heart and soul, that all may continue well at Haworth; above all in our grey half-inhabited house. God bless the walls thereof! Safety, health, happiness, and prosperity to you, papa, and Tabby.”—*Ibid.* pp. 302—304.

Not long after this she leaves Brussels, where she latterly acted as teacher, parting with great kindness from M. Héger. With Madame H. she had differences, which lead us to suspect that she also may be reproduced in “*Villette*,” but all was smoothed over at the last, and her pupils expressed a regret at losing her, which took her by surprise, but it did not, it seems, alter the deliberate opinion she had formed of foreign girlhood so far as to withhold another portrait of Belgic character more candid than flattering.

She returns home again, but the scheme for keeping school falls through, for one main reason, that Branwell's home, whenever he chose to return to it, was no fit place for girls. For a long time the sisters seem to have shut their eyes to his failings, or sought the consolation so fatal to elevation and refinement of character, of involving *all* men in the same sins; it was to the interest of

their blind affection to believe that he was only like other men of "any strength of character;" they fell, Mrs. Gaskell says, into the usual error of confounding strong passions with strong character—a notion at the bottom of what is blameable in all their books.

We have already questioned the nature and quality of their intense exclusive family affection; whether it was possible to be devoted to Branwell to the very last, we do not know, but it is clear he was their hope and pride long after he should have been their shame, and that they tolerated his society, and sacrificed every consideration to him, when intercourse was contamination. He was idle; he drank; he degraded himself with vice; he insulted their ears by infamous confessions, and made them familiar with the foulest blasphemies; he stupified himself with opium; they lived in terror of their lives, from his threatened violence; their home was miserable, their nerves and health shaken; and yet they endured his presence, not in hope of reclaiming him, but in simple endurance, without, it seems, a wish or thought of emancipation. We know not where the fault lay, or who was chiefly answerable for this state of things; but we wish to say that such endurance *was* a fault and not a merit. It is, we know, a difficult question (for he bore their name and was of their blood), and self-sacrifice is not too common and easy a virtue that we should disparage it, or treat slightly its manifestations. But, in the first place, there was the indulgence of a weak affection to counterbalance the suffering; and next, it is certain that a servile, heavy, dead, unreflecting self-denial—the acquiescence in pain or degradation as if they were our *fate*—never can be a virtue.

For after all, people have to choose between one form of self-devotion and another; we cannot nourish and cherish a brother Branwell and do our duty to society at large. This monster took all, consumed their means which they could have applied usefully, their time which might have benefited others, their friendship which could have cheered better natures; *all* happiness, credit, love, friendship, purity of mind, innocence of evil, all were laid upon this altar.

Unhappiness is by no means necessarily beneficial; we ought not to acquiesce in it for ourselves, if a way of escape or relief

offers itself, without very clearly satisfying ourselves that it is right to endure. Misery and disgrace, borne stolidly, do not point the mind heavenwards, it needs some spring and cheerfulness to lift the mind so high. Self love is a divine instinct under proper bounds, and so is self-respect. There are sufferings in their nature elevating; pain, poverty, bereavement, all may be turned to noblest uses, but not constant forced intercourse for years with shameless vice. If we are to judge of the worth of the sacrifice by its fruits, we can be at no pains to decide. All the sisters, in some degree, suffered in moral tone from this familiarity with evil; "like the dyers' hand" their own minds became tinged by the habitual soil. In the two younger, Emily and Anne, the result, to judge by their books, was frightful; all the wickedness of the world seems to be at their fingers' ends, and they have no perception that society at large has not been subject to the same contamination with themselves. Not that they manifest any *love* for vice, which is the reason most people write about it; the tone towards it is cold, moral, and misanthropical—but there it is unblushing and rampant, because as such they saw it in the only man (except their father) with whom they were brought into close contact—whose mind they could read. We have no means of judging who was the main cause of this incubus not being removed, but even if it was the father's wish, the daughters' submission was ill timed; they would have done well to remonstrate and urge their claim to consideration. But probably the question was never mooted, and never even occurred to any of them as a question; for the Brontes had the most extraordinary way of enduring evils that might have been remedied. There is a notable unanimity in this respect. To begin with Mr. Bronte: he sends four daughters to one school; two of them die from causes connected with the climate and diet of the school: he goes on sending the other two—it does not occur to him to change his plan: the authorities of the school have to decline the charge. His house and its situation prove unhealthy, there is no thought of a change; his servant becomes incapable, but she is never replaced. He begins to dine alone, and dines alone to the end of his days, until, poor man, there is no one to share his meals. Branwell embitters their existence,

destroys the health of body and mind of his sisters—they bear with him; no one thinks of placing him under salutary restraint and privation elsewhere. Finally the daughters die one by one, in consequence, as it really seems, of this system of blind acquiescence—one at least rejecting every attempt to avert the danger, clinging to the routine of existence to the last moment. The remaining daughter struggles on in loneliness and depression, her instinct is to reject alleviation; she feels herself under a fate: finally comes a lover offering to cheer her existence, and the father violently opposes himself, for no other reason than that it is a threatened change—as if the resolute pursuit of one unvarying course had answered. In fact they were a sort of zoophyte, at once rooted and sensitive; their habits were scarcely under the influence of reason, but of a blind necessity—and the result, a singular mixture of apathy and self-will, conspicuous in all, but modified in our heroine by some practical common sense and much real resignation, and reasonable, not simply blind and stolid patience and submission. Here is a sad picture of dejection caused by this brother. About this time, when they were giving up hope, she had been visiting her friend Mary, and writes:—

“I begin to perceive that I have too little life in me, now-a-days, to be fit company for any except very quiet people. Is it age, or what else, that changes me so?”

“Alas! she hardly needed to have asked this question. How could she be otherwise than “flat-spirited,” “a poor companion,” and “a sad drag” on the gaiety of those who were light-hearted and happy? Her honest plan for earning her own livelihood had fallen away, crumbled to ashes; after all her preparations, not a pupil had offered herself; and, instead of being sorry that this wish of many years could not be realized, she had reason to be glad. Her poor father, nearly sightless, depended upon her cares in his blind helplessness; but this was a sacred pious charge, the duties of which she was blessed in fulfilling. The black gloom hung over what had once been the brightest hope of the family—over Branwell, and the mystery in which his wayward conduct was enveloped. Somehow and sometime, he would have to turn to his home as a hiding place for shame; such was the sad foreboding of his sisters.”—*Ibid.* pp. 318, 319.

“Mary,” who was then going to Australia, says—

“When I last saw Charlotte (Jan. 1845), she told me she had quite decided to stay at home. She owned she did not like it. Her health was weak. She said she should like any change at first, as she had liked Brussels at first, and she thought that there must be some possibility for some people of having a life of more variety and more communion with human kind, but she saw none for her. I told her very warmly, that she ought not to stay at home; that to spend the next five years at home, in solitude and weak health, would ruin her; that she would never recover it. Such a dark shadow came over her face when I said, “Think of what you’ll be five years hence!” that I stopped, and said, “Don’t cry, Charlotte!” She did not cry, but went on walking up and down the room, and said in a little while, “But I intend to stay, Polly.”—*Ibid.* pp. 319, 320.

And in a few weeks after, Charlotte writes:

“I can hardly tell you how time gets on at Haworth. There is no event whatever to mark its progress. One day resembles another; and all have heavy, lifeless physiognomies. Sunday, baking-day, and Saturday, are the only ones that have any distinctive mark. Meantime, life wears away. I shall soon be thirty; and I have done nothing yet. Sometimes I get melancholy at the prospect before and behind me. Yet it is wrong and foolish to repine. Undoubtedly, my duty directs me to stay at home for the present. There was a time when Haworth was a very pleasant place to me; it is not so now. I feel as if we were all buried here. I long to travel; to work; to live a life of action. Excuse me, dear, for troubling you with my fruitless wishes. I will put by the rest, and not trouble you with them. You *must* write to me. If you knew how welcome your letters are, you would write very often. Your letters, and the French newspapers, are the only messengers that come to me from the outer world beyond our moors; and very welcome messengers they are.”—*Ibid.* pp. 320, 321.

To return to the influence of Branwell on her general estimate of human nature and manners. In spite of the familiarity with evil, which we are led to suppose the unrestrained tone of conversation amongst the few men of her acquaintance brought upon her, it is satisfactory to find an honest repugnance to its open professors. In speaking of a bad man—a curate—whose wife brought complaints of him to her father, she says:—

“She expressed great disgust and contempt towards him, and did not affect to have a shadow of regard in any way. I do not

wonder at this, but I *do* wonder she should ever marry a man towards whom her feelings must always have been pretty much the same as they are now. I am morally certain no decent woman could experience any thing but aversion towards such a man as Mr. —. Before I knew, or suspected his character, and when I rather wondered at his versatile talents, I felt it in an uncontrollable degree. I hated to talk with him—hated to look at him; though as I was not certain that there was substantial reason for such a dislike, and thought it absurd to trust to mere instinct, I both concealed and repressed the feeling as much as I could; and, on all occasions, treated him with as much civility as I was mistress of. I was struck with Mary's expression of a similar feeling at first sight; she said, when we left him, 'That is a hideous man, Charlotte!' I thought 'he is indeed.'—*Ibid.* pp. 222, 223.

These feelings she never lost in contact with actual mischief-working, misery-causing evil; she was severe on the great satirist whom she so intensely revered and admired, because she thought him too lenient to Fielding's course of life; she shuddered because she remembered Branwell; but something warped her judgment, where sin is seen in a more subtle shape; mere speculative deviations from the moral law do not outrage her in the same manner. It is the *way* a man has erred that revolts her more than the sin itself; thus George Sand's novels do not offend her as they ought, though of course she does make some protest; but the situations are too ideal to reach her resentments. And where she sees a sort of apology for Mr. Rochester in his unhappy marriage, her principles are not shocked, or her sense of (we must say) decency outraged, by the extraordinary confidence he imparts to Jane Eyre. Mrs. Gaskell says that in girlhood she had been used to hear that sort of language herself; female ears did not enjoy the immunity they do now in all but the most unprincipled society; and Branwell had confidences and pretended confidences which would throw Mr. Rochester into the shade. The long habit of finding excuses for him before he reached his latest degradation had lowered her standard; she did not *want* to believe in perfection. It is a noticeable fact that "Jane Eyre" was composed in the midst of the most poignant distresses caused by Branwell, and while she was, by her contact with him, most hardened to the free discussion of immorality—suffering

from it—bitter against it, but with the subject necessarily always uppermost.

For now the notion of composition, with the ultimate end of publishing, was assuming a settled form in the sisters' minds. The discovery of a MS. volume of Emily's verses led to a critical inspection of their joint stores and then followed a determination to print at their own risk. Charlotte was right, we think, in giving the first place to Emily; some of her poems convey an impression of remarkable force and vigor. The whole volume, indeed, exhibits thought, fancy, and power of versification of no common order. We wonder it made so little impression on the public mind; but the crudities and prolixities of young authors are drawbacks to account for any neglect of what is so little likely to excite attention as a volume of poetry with unknown signatures (for here they first assumed the names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, at once preserving their initials and concealing their sex); and the subjects, in many cases harsh in themselves or in their mode of treatment, would awaken little sympathy. However, the volume was printed and scrupulously paid for, and the sisters then began to feel their way in prose; all writing at the same time, and under the same impulse, but with very different ultimate success, though Charlotte's first great experiment could little prepare her for her future triumph. Her novel, "The Professor," was offered to all the world of publishers in vain. The public is promised the opportunity of judging how far this universal rejection was merited, for "The Professor" is now in the press. "Wuthering Heights" and "Agnes Grey," by Emily and Anne, found a publisher. In contrast with Emily's strange story, we approach "Jane Eyre" with respect. There we see the purifying influence of genius, which can discriminate between power and brutality—which knows what to choose and what to reject—which, under every disparagement and hindrance, has an intuitive sense of beauty, grace and fitness—which can clothe intensity of feeling in reasonable language—which can shake even a rude heart to its foundations, and reveal its human passion, not its veriest dregs. After tasting her sister's "fierce ragouts," we do not wonder that she could not understand what people meant by charging her story with coarseness. With such specimens in

her own family of utter unscrupulousness of diction on paper, or *videlicet*, she must have been rather conscious in herself of a guarded scrupulosity of decorum. Our readers must not suspect us of approving of Mr. Rochester, either in his conduct or tone of conversation, but these strange revelations extenuate some points. The woman who drew such a character had not to go out of the way for his worst features. She thought real men were all that sort of thing,—selfish, somewhat grovelling, with no guiding principle, but redeemable through their purer affections. She gives her heroine these sentiments. Resolute and unyielding in her own sense of duty, such as it is, her heart is not repelled by the act of treachery her lover all but carried out against her. His affection was an extenuation at the time when she fulfilled the "intolerable duty" of leaving him; it was a *claim*, not for a moment to be disputed when the barrier against their union was removed.

"Jane Eyre" was begun under the additional anxiety of her father's threatened blindness. She had accompanied him to Manchester, where the operation for cataract was successfully performed; and here, in spite of the discouragement of her first story being returned upon her hands, she set about proving the view she had recently laid down to her sisters, that it was a mistake to make heroine always handsome. "I will prove to you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours." When once in the train of the story she wrote continuously; we are not surprised that by the time she had effected her heroine's escape from Thornfield she had wrought herself into a fever. Certainly it was a dazzling power to find herself possessed of. What masculine force of style—what vivid life in the scenes—what daring originality in the situations—what a grasp of detail! The whole course of that abortive wedding-day is a masterpiece of bold and powerful writing. This time she had no repulse to complain of. She sent her book to Messrs. Smith and Elder. The firm seem successively to have sat up all night reading the MS.;—it was accepted, and published within two months, and "Curren Bell" was famous. But who was "Curren Bell?" The name and style were masculine, and yet, looking at it now, we

cannot but wonder how there could be a moment's doubt as to the sex of the writer. The scenes are all seen through woman's eyes; there is an identification of the author with the heroine which could not be assumed. These considerations, as we look at them now, outweigh the difficulties presented by either vigor of style or unscrupulousness of expression and execution. But then the publishers were as much in the dark as the world at large. Difficulties began to beset the sisters, who were charged with being one and the same; a more stupid mistake "the public," or any portion of it, never fell into; and Mrs. Gaskell makes a very pretty romance out of the two sisters'—Charlotte and Anne's—sudden journey to London to prove that they were two. Their arrival at the Chapter Coffee-house,—their short walk to the publishers, prolonged to an hour's length by their fear of the crossings. Mr. Smith's astonishment—

"When Charlotte put his own letter into his hands; the same letter which had excited so much disturbance at Haworth Parsonage only twenty-four hours before. 'Where did you get this?' said he,—as if he could not believe that the two young ladies dressed in black, of slight figure and diminutive stature, looking pleased yet agitated, could be the embodied Curren and Acton Bell, for whom curiosity had been hunting so eagerly in vain."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 68.

Their shy rejection of his hospitable invitations, and determination to remain unknown, which also influenced their refusal to meet well-known names—their visit to the Opera in their country-shaped dresses—the frightful headache, the consequence of so much excitement—the return home, "gray and very old," as she describes herself—all this would have answered to nobody's ideas of the author of "Jane Eyre:" as little would the patient return to her dreary home after this brilliant episode:—

"Branwell is the same in conduct as ever. His constitution seems much shattered.—Papa, and sometime all of us, have sad nights with him. He sleeps most of the day, and consequently will lie awake at night. But has not every house its trial?"—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 75.

Two months later, after three years of outrageous conduct, during which all respect seem to have been thrown aside, he died. She records that—

"His mind had undergone the peculiar

change which frequently precedes death, two days previously; the calm of better feelings filled it; a return of natural affection marked his last moments. He is in God's hands now; and the All-Powerful is likewise the All-Merciful. A deep conviction that he rests at last—rests well after his brief, erring, suffering, feverish life—fills and quiets my mind now.”—*Ibid.* p. 77.

This too ill-founded consolation is derived, not from temporary feeling, but from a persuasion early established amongst these sisters against the doctrine of eternal punishment. We meet with it in “*Jane Eyre*,” where Helen Burns (her sister Maria) enunciates it. And also in Anne’s novel.

Within a few months in the same year a far heavier blow fell on Charlotte—Emily’s health failed, and she sank rapidly before their eyes, her extraordinary temper showing itself in its utmost exaggeration as bodily disease gained upon her. She rejected their sympathy and all medical assistance; the sisters dared not notice her failing limbs and panting breath; she would receive help from none. The day of her death—

“One Tuesday morning in December, she arose and dressed herself as usual, making many a pause, but doing every thing for herself, and even endeavoring to take up her employment of sewing: the servants looked on, and knew what the catching, rattling breath, and the glazing of the eye too surely foretold; but she kept at her work; and Charlotte and Anne, though full of unspeakable dread, had still the faintest spark of hope. On that morning Charlotte wrote thus,—probably in the very presence of her dying sister:—

“Tuesday.

“I should have written to you before, if I had had one word of hope to say; but I have not. She grows daily weaker. The physician’s opinion was expressed too obscurely to be of use. He sent some medicine, which she would not take. Moments so dark as these I have never known. I pray for God’s support to us all. Hitherto He has granted it.

“The morning drew on to noon. Emily was worse: she could only whisper in gasps. Now, when it was too late, she said to Charlotte, ‘If you will send for a doctor, I will see him now.’ About two o’clock she died.”—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 83, 84.

Months after Charlotte writes:—“I cannot forget Emily’s death-day; it becomes a more fixed, a darker, a more frequently recurring idea than ever. It was very terrible. She was torn conscious, panting, reluctant, though

resolute, out of a happy life.” What a powerful and terrible picture of a death, as far as we are told, without a thought beyond! There are some lines by Ellis Bell (Emily Bronte), which sadly bear out the same impression. A girl addresses her dying lover, and implores him not to cross the Eternal Sea:—

“I hear its billows roar,
I see them foaming high;
But no glimpse of a further shore
Has blest my straining eye.

“Believe not what they urge
Of Eden isles beyond;
Turn back from that tempestuous surge
To thy own native land.

“It is not death, but pain
That struggles in thy breast;
Nay, rally, Edward—rouse again—
I can not let thee rest!”

Emily Bronte is altogether an enigma. We perceive a power about her which could not find reasonable vent or utterance, so shut in was it by her repulsive and unsocial qualities. The intense love of life is as strange a feature as any. Why should she care for life, who would not endure intercourse with her fellow-creatures—who would receive no influence or impressions even from her sisters? Her leanings and affinities were all of a weird character; the wild hold of her affections on the locality of her home,—the strange sympathy with the brute creation, so that one who knew her said, “she never showed regard for any human creature, all her love was reserved for animals:” the knowledge of their nature, which gave a magic power over them, as we are to judge by her management of her bull-dog “Keeper,” whom we regard as her familiar. It is thus reported:

“Keeper was faithful to the depths of his nature as long as he was with friends; but he who struck him with a stick or whip, roused the relentless nature of the brute, who flew at his throat forthwith, and held him there till one or the other was at the point of death. Now Keeper’s household fault was this. He loved to steal up-stairs, and stretch his square, tawny limbs, on the comfortable beds, covered over with delicate white counterpanes. But the cleanliness of the parsonage arrangements was perfect; and this habit of Keeper’s was so objectionable, that Emily, in reply to Tabby’s remonstrances, declared that, if he was found again transgressing, she herself, in defiance of warning and his well-known ferocity of nature, would beat him so severely that he would never offend again.

In the gathering dusk of an autumn evening, Tabby came, half triumphantly, half tremblingly, but in great wrath, to tell Emily that Keeper was lying on the best bed, in drowsy voluptuousness. Charlotte saw Emily's whitening face, and set mouth, but dared not speak to interfere; no one dared when Emily's eyes glowed in that manner out of the paleness of her face, and her lips were so compressed into stone. She went up-stairs, and Tabby and Charlotte stood in the gloomy passage below, full of the dark shadows of coming night. Down-stairs came Emily, dragging after her the unwilling Keeper, his hind legs set in a heavy attitude of resistance, held by the 'scuff of his neck,' but growling low and savagely all the time. The watchers would fain have spoken, but durst not, for fear of taking off Emily's attention, and causing her to avert her head for a moment from the enraged brute. She let him go, planted in a dark corner at the bottom of the stairs; no time was there to fetch stick or rod, for fear of the strangling clutch at her throat—her bare clenched fist struck against his red fierce eyes, before he had time to make his spring, and, in the language of the turf, she 'punished him' till his eyes were swelled up, and the half-blind, stupidified beast was led to his accustomed lair, to have his swollen head fomented and cared for by the very Emily herself. The generous dog owed her no grudge; he loved her dearly ever after; he walked first among the mourners to her funeral; he slept moaning for nights at the door of her empty room, and never, so to speak, rejoiced, dog fashion, after her death."—*Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 309, 310.

But strange as everything is about Emily Bronte, the strangest thing by far is her book over which such passages as these throw a certain light. We cannot read many pages of "Wuthering Heights, without being driven to construct a theory. Without such a refuge it would be impossible to proceed beyond the first chapter. But philosophers are never revolted or disgusted; what shocks plain incurious natures, stimulates the analyzer of causes and motives. And here her sympathy with *animals*, and utter want of sympathy with *human* nature, together with certain animal qualities in herself, as for instance, a *dogged temper*, supply a solution to what would otherwise be an impenetrable mystery—how a quiet, reserved, as far as we are informed, steady and well-conducted young woman, a clergyman's daughter, living all her life in a remote parsonage, and seeing nobody, could have conceived such scenes, or

couched her conceptions in such language. With this fresh scent, as it were, we can pursue the story to the end, not without amusement, for the language is vigorous, and the scenes energetic.

If the respectable bull-dog Keeper could have been endowed with the ambition and the power to describe graphically the passions of his race—if you could put a pen in his hand and tell him to delineate the springs and impulses which prompt the displays of dog nature, with the outer workings of which we are alone familiar—if he could tell us the secret causes of every yelp, bark and snarl, and spring, and bite, which we know now only in their effects—he would write precisely such a book as "Wuthering Heights;" and as "Life in the Kennel," it would be a very striking and clever performance. Just such instinctive, soulless, savage creatures as compose a pack of hounds, form the *dramatis personæ* of this unique story. A vicious dog, if he were endowed with human organs, would no doubt swear as well as growl, and shoot and stab as well as bite, if he understood the use of weapons. And because they are called men and women, and are invested with human attributes, these accomplishments are added in the story to their canine powers of offence and annoyance. But the disguise of humanity is, after all, but feebly assumed, and constantly disappears altogether; the whole company drop on all fours as the authoress warms with her subject. Her heroines *scratch*, and *tear*, and *bite*, and *slap*; their likings are merely instinctive, without a thought of reason or moral feeling; their mutual rivalries and triumphs, antipathies and hatreds, are brutal (we use the word in its merely literal sense) in the most extreme degree; that is, they are impossible in human nature, and natural to brutes. The men are even more furious and inhuman in their dog-nature. We see that it is *in* them all; the idea of change or reform is out of the question; they roll, and grapple, and struggle, and throttle, and clutch, and tear, and trample, not metaphorically, but with hands, and feet, and teeth. The thought of murder is habitual to them, the idea of conscience never interferes with their revenges. Their love is as vicious and cruel as their hate, they will *strike* the objects of their affection, and the spaniels do not resent it, and curse them in life and in death, and are savage in their

grief. Their terrors and fears are animal shudderings; they say of themselves that they have no pity; the one solitary deed of kindness in the book is the cutting down a dog that is being hanged; they liken one another to dogs; they act "the dog in the manger;" they turn tail. We meet with such phrases as "his mouth watered to tear him with his teeth"—"she ground her teeth into splinters"—not here and there, but in every chapter. Finally, their meals are dog-meals; if they begin with the thin disguise of tea and cake, they degenerate quickly into porridge and bones. They spill, and scatter, and "slobber," and snarl over their food, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

Our reader will think this a strong picture; let him read for himself if he will, and judge if we have not furnished the key to this phenomenon. Inasmuch as our interpretation throws the bad language into the background, the oaths and execrations we have given only too favorable a report, and misjudged the animal creation, in representing the soul of a dog as possessing this turbid and sullen human nature, and using its gifts to his own purposes. Glancing over Emily's poems after the perusal of this monstrous performance, we the more regret that this phase of her nature should ever have found expression. Verse was her real utterance; here we find her "clothed and in her right mind." If she were our main subject, we would give our readers the opportunity of judging of what we cannot but think their unusual merit. Daring and questionable thoughts there are, but alleviated by tender human feeling, and set off by clear vivid imagery, in flowing harmonious numbers.

This singular young woman, the object of her sister's devoted and somewhat unaccountable attachment, had no sooner passed away, than the youngest, Anne, began to show symptoms of disease, which rapidly developed into consumption. Here, however, there was the comfort of nursing and tender attention. Anne was not unnatural; the whole history of her illness is interesting, and impresses us most favorably. Charlotte divided her cares between her father and the sinking invalid, and showed the highest qualities of her nature—all its love, intensity, and scrupulous sacrifice of inclination to duty—in those few months of anguish which preceded the laying her last sister in the grave, not beside Emily,

but at Scarborough, where she went actually *dying*, without either Charlotte or herself being aware how near the end was. It was illuminated by the Christian's peace and hope; a remarkable calm pervaded her last hours; she would have nothing go on differently because she was dying. She urged upon her kind attendants that they should attend divine service as usual. She wished, if it had been possible, to go herself. She placed her full, deliberate trust in her Redeemer's merits, and bade her weeping sister "take courage" and commended her to the kind offices of her faithful friend.

"Ere long the restlessness of approaching death appeared, and she was borne to the sofa. On being asked if she were easier, she looked gratefully at her questioner, and said, 'It is not *you* who can give me ease, but soon all will be well, through the merits of our Redeemer.' Shortly after this, seeing that her sister could hardly restrain her grief, she said, 'Take courage, Charlotte; take courage.' Her faith never failed, and her eye never dimmed till about two o'clock, when she calmly and without a sigh passed from the temporal to the eternal. So still and so hallowed were her last hours and moments. There was no thought of assistance or of dread. The doctor came and went two or three times. The hostess knew that death was near, yet so little was the house disturbed by the presence of the dying, and the sorrow of those so nearly bereaved, that dinner was announced as ready, through the half-opened door, as the living sister was closing the eyes of the dead one. She could now no more stay the welled-up grief of her sister with her emphatic and dying 'Take courage,' and it burst forth in brief but agonizing strength."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 109, 110.

It is quite fitting that we should dwell on details like these, and find comfort in them, and contemplate them in juxtaposition with the eccentricities of *her* authorship, which would be very astounding indeed, if Emily's was not more so. Not that the "Tenant of Windfell Hall" suggests the same ideas as her sister's; we are amongst men and women, such as they are—but such a set! Anne set it before her as a conscientious duty, to represent the progress from bad to worse of vice. Nothing should deter her from this mission, which she seemed to think her own circumstances imposed upon her. The book is not so clever as "Wuthering Heights;" there is not the same force or swing; but, instead, a deliberate, careful,

step by step delineation of what only a very morbid conscience could think it to the interests of society to delineate. We are led by Mrs. Gaskell, who has something to do to reconcile these rough, coarse details of her subject with the refined tone—the shadow of interesting melancholy—she would willingly throw over her picture, to understand that this book does really represent Anne's experience of life, particularly of life seen in her brother Branwell's. And such a record of ruffianism surely no woman ever undertook to chronicle. The coarseness of manners and unfathomable vulgarity of tone, the brutality of the men and general offensiveness of the women, the atmosphere of low society that pervades every scene, make the story unique as a *moral* one. On this point it forms a marked distinction from Emily's, who sets no such task before her: but here there is a very serious and moral strain maintained throughout. All the villainies are recorded with the good intention of disgusting us with vice, and showing sin in its native deformity. If we wanted an argument against the fancied duty of keeping such a fellow as Branwell in free intercourse with his unhappy sisters, we should find it in the evidence of stain and contamination this book furnishes. Anne Bronte grew used to the idea of men, as *such*, being vain and unfeeling in their manner, and insolent and unblushing in their vices. We presume she means her reader to feel interest in the two principal personages of her story—we will not call them hero and heroine—the latter of whom, by her imprudent marriage, furnishes the lesson of the book. This young woman is positively represented as listening before marriage to her brutal lover's stories of his past dissipation, told not in sorrow, but in triumph, and with an accumulation of aggravating circumstances which it is a wonder a woman could become acquainted with.

The author has apparently no taste—at any rate no conception of a man of decent behavior and principles—for the young farmer who succeeds to this monster in the lady's affections is hardly more to our taste than himself. Violent in his temper, rude in his impulses, fickle in his attachments, ungrateful, sullen, vain, and loutish—this picture of what she thinks attractive gives us a more dreary picture of the destitution of all things lovely and of good report in which she lived, than even the more glowing atrocities to

which these qualities form a contrast. She clearly thinks it an interesting trait, an example of noble, vigorous nature, that in a fit of unreasonable and impertinent jealousy he should strike his friend with the butt end of his whip, and leave him for dead on the road; and not even be moved or softened by the sight of the mischief he had done; while the way he treats a poor girl whom he had flirted into a liking of himself, would constitute him the *villain* of any well-trained young lady's novel. Her gentle imagination could hardly have conceived any thing so bad as Anne Bronte's best. Not that any thing will make us believe that any state of English society is represented by such unmixed repulsiveness. But it needs imagination, which Anne had not, to reproduce the world a writer lives in. A mere matter of fact transcript of certain errors and crimes and a certain false tone of morals, is sure to make things worse than they are, for all the redeeming points are forgotten, and the deformities stand out as they can hardly do in real life. But these sisters seem to have had an eye for defects. Great sins had a sort of fascination for them, not from the smallest desire to participate, but because activity and vigor in wrong doing offered an exciting contrast to their own existence. It cannot but be wished that they had sometimes seen a gentleman (we speak more especially of Emily and Anne), though how far they would have been accessible to his refining influence, or appreciated his refinement, we cannot guess. They never seem to have been sensible of a want in this respect. There are no elegant disguises in their novels; they speak of life exactly as they see it. The kitchen is the scene of half the events. Very comfortable its homely cheerfulness feels in "Shirley;" we do not at all object to it there; but somehow Anne's and Emily's kitchens are *low* and tell a tale. It is no wonder to find afterwards that Charlotte felt the task of revising these tales for another edition "exquisitely painful and depressing," and that there is a hint of regret, in vague language—all, no doubt, that she dare express even then—that nothing would make Emily conscious that every page was "surcharged with a sort of moral electricity." But we ought to apologize for having dwelt so long on what only indirectly concerns our main subject.

After her sisters' deaths, Charlotte's life assumes a new aspect; it becomes a literary,

and as such, a public one. That is, her interests were mainly with her books, and, following on their progress and success, with the friendships into which this publicity led her. Not that her own nature or habits changed. She lived with her father, haunted by fears for his health and her own, in a solitude which sometimes became frightful to her, but which she could seldom be prevailed on to leave. It was some relief to tell these feelings to her friend, it made them more endurable. She thus pathetically describes her first return to her desolate home. It is sad to find that vigorous pen expressing as forcibly her own keen anguish as the scenes of her imagination.

"July, 1849.

"I intended to have written a line to you to-day, if I had not received yours. We did indeed part suddenly; it made my heart ache that we were severed without the time to exchange a word; and yet perhaps it was better. I got here a little before eight o'clock. All was clean and bright, waiting for me. Papa and the servants were well; and all received me with an affection which should have consoled. The dogs seemed in strange ecstasy. I am certain they regarded me as the harbinger of others. The dumb creatures thought that as I was returned, those who had been so long absent were not far behind.

"I left Papa soon, and went into the dining-room: I shut the door—I tried to be glad that I was come home—I have always been glad before—except once—even then I was cheered. But this time joy was not to be the sensation. I felt that the house was all silent—the rooms were empty. I remembered where the three were laid—in what narrow dark dwellings—never more to reappear on earth. So the sense of desolation and bitterness took possession of me. The agony that *was to be undergone*, and *was not* to be avoided, came on. I underwent it and passed a dreary evening and night, and a mournful morrow: to-day I am better.

"I do not know how life will pass, but I certainly do feel confidence in Him who has upheld me hitherto. Solitude may be cheered, and made endurable beyond what I can believe. The great trial is when evening closes and night approaches. At that hour, we used to assemble in the dining-room—we used to talk. Now I sit by myself necessarily I am silent. I cannot help thinking of their last days, remembering their sufferings, and what they said and did, and how they looked in mortal affliction. Perhaps all this will become less poignant in time."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 111, 112.

And, soon after, she writes:

"My life is what I expected it to be. Sometimes when I wake in the morning, and know that Solitude, Remembrance, and Longing are to be almost my sole companions all day through—that at night I shall go to bed with them, that they will long keep me sleepless—that next morning I shall wake to them again,—sometimes, Nell, I have a heavy heart of it. But crushed I am not, yet; nor robbed of elasticity, nor of hope, nor quite of endeavor. I have some strength to fight the battle of life. I am aware, and can acknowledge, I have many comforts, many mercies. Still I can *get on*. But I do hope and pray, that never may you, or any one I love, be placed as I am. To sit in a lonely room—the clock ticking loud through a still house—and have open before the mind's eye the record of the last year, with its shocks, sufferings, losses—is a trial."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 113.

In the midst of gloom like this she began "Shirley,"—which in parts expresses the sadness of the period; and found the employment the only alleviation to mental distress. It was one feature of her literary character to desire to know *every* thing that was said of her books. She lived in two spheres, that of the woman, and the author; as the one narrowed the other expanded—and in the author's world, criticism and the opinions of the press were her society. She could never bring herself to talk freely with strangers, however interesting to her by reputation and character, so that it is no wonder that such contact as she could have—the world's judgment, sympathy, and even censure—any comment that could reach her without invading her reserve—would have a peculiar interest and weight, not known to writers who can take their part in the stir and bustle of life. The first criticism of which we read as affecting her, is a sharp attack on "Jane Eyre," in the "Quarterly," of which she writes:

"Margaret Hall called 'Jane Eyre' a 'wicked book,' on the authority of the 'Quarterly'; an expression which coming from her, I will here confess, struck somewhat deep. It opened my eyes to the harm the 'Quarterly' had done. Margaret would not have called it 'wicked,' if she had not been told so.

"No matter,—whether known or unknown—misjudged, or the contrary,—I am resolved not to write otherwise. I shall bend as my powers tend. The two human beings who understood me, and whom I understood, are gone: I have some that love me yet, and whom I love, without expecting, or having a right to expect, that they shall perfectly

understand me. I am satisfied: but I must have my own way in the matter of writing. The loss of what we possess nearest and dearest to us in this world, produces an effect upon the character; we search out what we have yet left that can support, and, when found, we cling to it with a hold of new-strung tenacity. The faculty of imagination lifted me when I was sinking, three months ago; its active exercise has kept my head above water since; its results cheer me now, for I feel that they have enabled me to give pleasure to others. I am thankful to God, who gave me the faculty; and it is for me a part of my religion to defend this gift, and to profit by its possession."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 121, 122.

It is curious to contrast with the public triumphs and reverses of this time, her home employments and interests, which were attendance on Tabby and Tabby's assistant, during the illness of both, and performing all the household work herself—a state of things which would not a little have surprised the Reviewer, who had probably anything but a domestic notion of his victim.

Her future friendships were formed on purely literary grounds. A friendly criticism, a warm, discriminating letter of commendation, opened her heart. The principles of her correspondents, the part they took in controversy, the line in religion or irreligion, would not come in question, and would enter little into her consideration, even when the bare knowledge of their opinions reached her. The sympathy she received was from the ultra-liberal party, and therefore from that time she fraternized with them, and with Miss Martineau at their head, without any real agreement with abstract scepticism. The tone of "Shirley" is not at all this. There is a refreshing flavor of the old church and king school in Helstone; and her spirited account of a Sunday-school fête, the processions meeting in the narrow lane, and the victory over the dissenters, would wake no echo in her new allies. But something in "Jane Eyre" did; not only its remarkable genius, but a certain laxity in viewing moral questions, a defiance of restraints to the free exercise of the imagination, showed an affinity with their party which in act she could never have carried out.

She was very sensitive of criticism on moral points, and indeed showed a general soreness and susceptibility for which we respect her,

though we think it inconsistent with her own method of impaling living persons, obnoxious to her feelings or taste, in her own works. How she could have the face to resent anything, after her behavior to so many of her own neighbors and acquaintance, we do not see. It proceeds from the same short-sightedness which allowed her to be sensitively nervous in concealing her authorship, while she betrayed herself in every chapter by her portraits from the life. It was this custom of hers of writing from the life—a practice evident from the style (though the circumstances and persons were all, we are assured, unknown, down to the author herself)—which, we believe, led the writer of an article on "Villette," which appeared in this Review, to use the offensive word "alien" as applied to her.* No person, living on friendly, cordial terms with those about her, could, it was assumed, have adopted such a style of writing. And reserve did *alienate* her. No person living out of her exceedingly narrow circle had the slightest hold on her tenderness or sympathy; it is the tendency of all reserve. But the word *alien* might have another meaning, and as such, she complains of it in the following pathetic letter, which we are sure will interest our readers. Any one taking the trouble to refer to the article in question, will see that no such interpretation as she says some persons (not herself) drew from the words, could fairly be given, but that it was so understood by any, and thus caused her undesigned pain, is subject of regret:

"To the Editor of the *Christian Remembrancer*."

"Haworth, near Keighley, Yorkshire, July 18, 1853.

"SIR,—I think I cannot be doing wrong in addressing you a few remarks respecting an article which appeared in the '*Christian Remembrancer*,' for last April. I mean an article noticing 'Villette.'

"When first I read that article I thought only of its ability, which seemed to me considerable, of its acumen, which I felt to be penetrating; an occasional misconception passed scarcely noticed, and I smiled at certain passages from which evils have since risen so heavy as to oblige me to revert seriously to their origin. Conscious myself that the import of these insinuations was far indeed from truth, I forgot to calculate how they might appear to that great Public which personally did not know me.

* *Christian Remembrancer*, April, 1853, vol. xxv. p. 423.

"The passage to which I particularly allude characterizes me by a strong expression. I am spoken of as *an alien,—it might seem from society, and amenable to none of its laws.*

"The 'G——' newspaper gave a notice in the same spirit. The 'E——' culled isolated extracts from your review, and presented them in a concentrated form as one paragraph of unqualified condemnation.

"The result of these combined attacks, all to one effect—all insinuating some disadvantageous occult motive for a retired life—has been such, that at length I feel it advisable to speak a few words of temperate explanation in the quarter that seems to me most worthy to be thus addressed, and the most likely to understand rightly my intention. Who my reviewer may be I know not, but I am convinced he is no narrow-minded or naturally unjust thinker.

"To him I would say no cause of seclusion such as he would imply has ever come near my thoughts, deeds, or life. It has not entered my experience. It has not crossed my observation.

"Providence so regulated my destiny that I was born and have been reared in the seclusion of a country parsonage. I have never been rich enough to go out into the world as a participator in its gaieties, though it early became my duty to leave home in order partly to diminish the many calls on a limited income. That income is lightened of claims in another sense now, for of a family of six I am the only survivor.

"My father is now in his seventy-seventh year; his mind is clear as it ever was, and he is not infirm, but he suffers from partial privation and threatened loss of sight; as his general health is also delicate, he cannot be left often or long: my place consequently is at home. These are reasons which make retirement a plain duty; but were no such reasons in existence, were I bound by no such ties, it is very possible that seclusion might still appear to me, on the whole, more congenial than publicity; the brief and rare glimpses I have had of the world do not incline me to think I should seek its circles with very keen zest—nor can I consider such disinclination a just subject for reproach.

"This is the truth. The careless, rather than malevolent insinuations of reviewers have, it seems, widely spread another impression. It would be weak to complain, but I feel that it is only right to place the real in opposition to the unreal.

"Will you kindly show this note to my reviewer? Perhaps he cannot now find an antidote for the poison into which he dipped that shaft he shot at "Currer Bell," but when

again tempted to take aim at other prey—let him refrain his hand a moment till he has considered consequences to the wounded, and recalled the 'golden rule.'

"I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

"C. BRONTE."

Though criticism was never more needed than in the case of Currer Bell, yet this is inevitably a sad book for critics. We do not blame ourselves for what has been said in our pages of the author of "Jane Eyre." We could not do otherwise than censure what was censurable. Where would books get their deserts, how could judgment be given, if private considerations had weight to restrain independent public opinion? Critics would then be no better than partial friends. But such revelations as this book gives us are a lesson to weigh words. We should never forget that the unknown author has a known side; that he is not an abstraction. And here we are taught that the private side of a character may be in strong contrast to its public manifestation; that it needs rare discernment to form a true estimate of a writer from his works; and that the boldest, most fearless style, may emanate from a nature which has its sensitive, shrinking, timid side. We believe that all the critics thought they had a tolerably tough nature to deal with, that there was no need to sugar the bitter draught in this instance; and when a woman assumed a masculine tone, wrote as well or better than any man amongst them, and showed herself afraid of nothing, that gallantry and patronizing tenderness which is commonly bestowed upon women was changed to gall. And now the administrators of the potion have to reflect on the private most feminine sorrows of this Amazon; of a patient life of monotonous duty; of the passionate hold the purest domestic affections had on her character; and which amongst them, if he could rewrite his criticism, would not now and then erase an epithet, spare a sarcasm, modify a sweeping condemnation? We own it wounds our tenderest feelings to know her sensitiveness to such attacks; and when she sheds tears over the *Times* critique—of all things in the world to weep over—our heart bleeds indeed.

But besides the judgment of the press, she had friendly criticism more to her taste to reply to. Mr. Lewes had commended Miss Austen to her as a model, and she answers—

"Why do you like Miss Austen so very much? I am puzzled on that point. What induced you to say that you would have rather written 'Pride and Prejudice,' or 'Tom Jones,' than any of the Waverley Novels?"

"I had not seen 'Pride and Prejudice' till I read that sentence of yours, and then I got the book. And what did I find? An accurate daguerreotypied portrait of a common-place face; a carefully-fenced, highly-cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses. These observations will probably irritate you, but I shall run the risk."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 53, 54.

And again :—

"What a strange lecture comes next in your letter! You say I must familiarize my mind with the fact, that 'Miss Austen is not a poetess has no "sentiment" (you scornfully enclose the word in inverted commas), no eloquence, none of the ravishing enthusiasm of poetry,'—and then you add, I must 'learn to acknowledge her as one of the greatest artists, of the greatest painters of human character, and one of the writers with the nicest sense of means to an end that ever lived.' . . . Miss Austen being, as you say, without 'sentiment,' without *poetry*, maybe is sensible, real (more real than true), but she cannot be great."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 55, 56.

We do not wonder that Charlotte Brontë could not enter into Miss Austen. With certain powers in common, their education, training, and experience of life were so absolutely different, that no chord in harmony could be struck between them. Miss Austen described life as she saw it, genteel, decorous, every-day domestic life. Her disciplined mind and easy temper saw in this aspect of existence all that satisfied the wants of her nature. She could take her part in it well. Herself fortunate in a pleasing person, agreeable address, and friends in the sphere of society she depicts, what she drew she shared in. She knew perfectly how people acted in the intercourse of every day; she had insight into deeper currents of feeling, as experienced by the society to the delineation of which she devotes her powers. For, we must assure Mr. Lewes and Miss Brontë, Miss Austen *was* a poet. It would be just as reasonable to deny the title to Gray, because he was precise in his dress, and

careful not to soil his shoes in his search of the picturesque and sublime, as to refuse it to the author of "Persuasion," because her characters are all well-behaved gentlemen and ladies. Her imagination knew how to work in such decorous, veiled excitement as "society" gives room for. The happy stir of domestic love, the thrill of a reciprocal passion, the trials of unrequited tenderness in a chastened, well-regulated nature—all this, as disciplined by the will or by the conventionalities of society, she drew as no one else can do. She wrote of human nature precisely as she heard and saw it. She never attempted what she had no pattern for, and Miss Brontë's rough and ready specimens never came in her way. She would not have taken to them as Miss Brontë did if they had presented themselves.

Now, into society, technically so called, Miss Brontë had no insight, because she never saw it, never was in it, and knew nothing about it. Men and women never were viewed by her as united by one social bond, as acting upon one another in a certain acknowledged and received relation. The persons we come in contact with under her guidance are in no such connection; they are independent of any social code. They expatiate in a freedom which persons once feeling themselves members of a body cannot attain to. Moreover of these she saw but little, and conversed with them still less. There was little active companionship; they were studies rather than acquaintance. Shyness and self-consciousness kept her apart from her fellows. Again we cannot doubt that curiosity (such as she attributes to that clever boy Martin Yorke, in "Shirley") influenced her intercourse with others rather than good fellowship. She was so much an artist, that her liking was for whatever would make a good picture and *tell*. She was lenient therefore to picturesque vices; they were so many books given her to study. She mused over them, she pondered, she looked anatomically into their construction. She entered into their motives: and what we can sympathize with and enter into, we are lenient with. All this in contrast to her rival, if we may call her so. But to go on: her life was a silent one, an ascetic and recluse one. She did not see enough of life, so called, or hear its speech, to know how it talked in its careless, common-place moods. Her study

of the heart, her interest in its deeper emotions, made her know how it would act when stirred; she put the excitement into words, and the reader, recognizing as true the *feeling* in that utterance, does not trouble himself to consider whether it is true as *spoken*. When she says Miss Austen is more *real* than *true*, she expresses this difference between them; the one tells us what people *say* on any given occasion, the other what they *think*. The distinction is carefully noted and acted upon by Miss Austen, and totally disregarded by Miss Bronte. Hear Mr. Knightly, in "Emma," on this point:

"Another thing must be taken into consideration, too—Mrs. Elton does not talk to Miss Fairfax as she speaks of her. We all know the difference between the pronouns he, or she, and thou, the plainest spoken amongst us; we all feel the influences of a something beyond common civility in our personal intercourse with each other—a something more early implanted. We cannot give any body the disagreeable hints that we may have been very full of the hour before. We feel things very differently."—*Emma*, p. 225.

This most true distinction never seems to have entered Miss Bronte's mind. The things, for example, that people say to one another in "Shirley" are perfectly out of the question from one human being to another, though so precisely what they would *think*, that the reader is hardly aware of the impossibility. They are the *mute* responses, the *solitary* revenges the mind indulges in: bitter musings, unspoken reflections of a spiteful, an angry, or an eloquent heart. As soliloquies on the one hand, and the answers of the heart to provocation on the other, they could not be better; but no living being could really dream of giving either utterance in words. There are occasions, rare in each man's life, when all the barriers of custom break down; then the heart speaks out regardless of the chains of habit. These occasions are Miss Bronte's opportunity. There is hardly any analogy between ordinary life and such moments. Experience of the measured movements of society may even hamper the imagination, from penetrating, as it otherwise would, the eccentricities, the grotesqueness, the rude power of a nature standing free from every restraint, and speaking out from wounded feeling, injured pride, or awakened passion. This certainly is not Miss Austen's sphere. The argument carries

us further. Without being misunderstood, may we not say that there are things that may be *thought* of which should not be written or talked about? The mind flies on to consequences. There are subjects which, in the nature of things, pass through the mind, which it is not fitting should pass the lips, except on rare and compulsory occasions. It is the peculiarity of Miss Bronte, that she never knew, owing to her share in the almost insane family reserve which shut them out from all general conversation, the boundary line which separates thought—the musings and reasonings of the heart—from what passes the lips. Moreover the exceeding curiosity we have noticed to look into the human heart may not be compatible with scrupulous feminine delicacy. Women generally portray best what they hear—either society as it is, or as they think it ought to be, if men were influenced by higher motives and a larger and more spiritual view of life. But Miss Bronte liked men best as she knew them; she liked their roughnesses, and so look into their hearts, and divine what their undisciplined natures would lead them to under trial and temptations. She disclaims any attempt at a perfection. She recoils from a perfect character as we do from a ghost, and for the same reason, the predominance of the spiritual element. Humanity, even in its most vulgar temptations—even to its love of money—she can allow for; she sees in fact they are inseparable from the men she knows of: she likes what she is used to, whatever it is, better than any unfamiliar amendment. She likes breezes and storms, and rough scenes, or whatever shows nature's strength: and because Miss Austen is not at home in them she will not care for her works.

We are not surprised to find that Miss Bronte was a deliberate writer; whatever fault may be found with the matter, the manner deserves unalloyed praise. She was conscientious in always doing her best; even with applause sounding in her ears and every motive stimulating to authorship, she would always bide her time. She knew her own strength and weakness; she felt that she had not a large experience to draw upon, and she would not exhaust herself by rapidity. Her writings are from imagination, not cleverness, which is a perennial spring, and will bear a greater drain than any but the most prolific

genius. Mrs. Gaskell calls the attention of the reader to her excellent choice of words. Few women have attained to such precision and force of style; few so absolutely express what they mean. It is interesting, then, to know how she attained to this excellence; and we find what we suspect is the case with all clear, exact, luminous styles, that she took her time—she waited for the right thing to say—she waited for the right word to say it in.

"Any one who has studied her writings,—whether in print or in her letters; any one who has enjoyed the rare privilege of listening to her talk, must have noticed her singular felicity in the choice of words. She herself, in writing her books, was solicitous on this point. One set of words was the truthful mirror of her thoughts; no others, however apparently identical in meaning, would do. She had that strong practical regard for the simple holy truth of expression, which Mr. Trench has enforced, as a duty too often neglected. She would wait patiently, searching for the right term, until it presented itself to her. It might be provincial, it might be derived from the Latin; so that it accurately represented her idea, she did not mind whence it came; but this care makes her style present the finish of a piece of mosaic. Each component part, however small, has been dropped into the right place. She never wrote down a sentence until she clearly understood what she wanted to say, had deliberately chosen the words, and arranged them in their right order. Hence it comes that, in the scraps of paper covered with her pencil writing which I have seen, there will occasionally be a sentence scored out, but seldom, if ever, a word or an expression. She wrote on these bits of paper in a minute hand, holding each against a piece of board, such as is used in binding books, for a desk. This plan was necessary for one so short-sighted as she was; and, besides, it enabled her to use pencil and paper, as she sat near the fire in the twilight hours, or if (as was too often the case) she was wakeful for hours in the night. Her finished manuscripts were copied from these pencil scraps, in clear, legible, delicate traced writing, almost as easy to read as print."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 9, 10.

When publishers urge haste, and desire to press forward her labors, she answers:—

"It is not at all likely," (she says) "that my book will be ready at the time you mention. If my health is spared, I shall get on with it as fast as is consistent with its being done, if not *well*, yet as well as I can do it. *Not one whit faster.* When the mood leaves

me (it has left me now, without vouchsafing so much as a word or a message when it will return) I put by the MS. and wait till it comes back again. God knows, I sometimes have to wait long—*very* long it seems to me."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 237.

She felt herself almost superstitiously under the influences of her genius. To Mrs. Gaskell—

"She said, that it was not every day that she could write. Sometimes weeks, or even months, elapsed before she felt she had any thing to add to that portion of her story which was already written. Then, some morning she would waken up, and the progress of her tale lay clear and bright before her, in distinct vision. When this is the case, all her care was to discharge her household and filial duties, so as to obtain leisure to sit down and write out the incidents and consequent thoughts, which were, in fact, more present to her mind at such times than her actual life itself. Yet notwithstanding this 'possession' (as it were), those who survived, of her daily and household companions, are clear in their testimony, that never was the claim of duty, never was the call of another for help, neglected for an instant. It had become necessary to give Tabby—now nearly eighty years of age, the assistance of a girl. Tabby relinquished any of her work with jealous reluctance, and could not bear to be reminded, though ever so delicately, that the acuteness of her senses was dulled by age. The other servant might not interfere with what she chose to consider her exclusive work. Among other things she reserved to herself the right of peeling the potatoes for dinner; but as she was growing blind, she often left in those black specks, which we in the North call the 'eyes' of the potato. Miss Bronte was too dainty a housekeeper to put up with this; yet she could not bear to hurt the faithful old servant, by bidding the younger maiden go over the potatoes again, and so reminding Tabby that her work was less effectual than formerly. Accordingly she would steal into the kitchen, and quietly carry of the bowl of vegetables, without Tabby's being aware, and breaking off in the full flow of interest and inspiration in her writing, carefully cut out the specks in the potatoes, and noiselessly carry them back to their place. This little proceeding may show how orderly and fully she accomplished her duties, even at those times when the 'possession' was upon her."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 8, 9.

We doubt this "possession" in the distinct marked way in which she puts it. Beyond the bare fact that she was some days in better cue for composition than others, we think the

notion superstitious. Such an impression always gives a writer an undue confidence in the efforts of his brain—as though he himself were not responsible under the divine *afflatus*—which approaches to a belief in his own inspiration. Our perceptions, at least of right and wrong, truth and error, do not depend on times and seasons, and happy moments; and yet it sometimes seems as if she made them do so, and justifies herself under misconstruction by the feeling of having obeyed an impulse which her conscience dared not resist. But she was too real and strong a character for conceit. There is no vanity of successful authorship. She never for a moment loses her head. Old associations, and affections, and friendships, lose nothing of their sway. When fame comes, and she is sought out and pointed at and courted, her home and her father are still the most potent influences. After being made a lion in London, and men of note and distinction, in their several ways, pressing their acquaintance upon her; after, as far as her shy timid nature and weak health allowed, she had tasted the charm of literary intercourse and brilliant society; after having conversed with her hero—her Titan—Thackeray, and breakfasted with Rogers; after scientific men had shown her the Crystal Palace, and artists had shown her pictures, and fellow authoresses had sought her intimacy, here is still the picture of her oppressively quiet home life. We give some sentences from Mrs. Gaskell's report of her visit to Haworth:

"I went round the house to the front door, looking to the church;—moors everywhere beyond and above. The crowded grave-yard surrounds the house and small grass enclosure for drying clothes.

"I don't know that I ever saw a spot more exquisitely clean; the most dainty place for that I ever saw. To be sure, the life is like clock-work. No one comes to the house; nothing disturbs the deep repose; hardly a voice is heard; you catch the ticking of the clock in the kitchen, or the buzzing of a fly in the parlor, all over the house. Miss Bronte sits alone in her parlor; breakfasting with her father in his study at nine o'clock. She helps in the housework; for one of their servants, Tabby, is nearly ninety, and the other only a girl. Then I accompanied her in her walks on the sweeping moors: the heather-bloom had been blighted by a thunder-storm a day or two before, and was all of a livid brown color, instead of the blaze of

purple glory it ought to have been. O! those high, wild, desolate moors, up above the whole world, and the very realms of silence! Home to dinner at two. Mr. Bronte has his dinner sent into him. All the small table arrangements had the same dainty simplicity about them. . . . I soon observed that her habits of order were such that she could not go on with the conversation if a chair was out of its place; everything was arranged with delicate regularity. We talked over the old times of her childhood; of her elder sister's (Maria's) death,—just like that of Helen Burns in 'Jane Eyre'; of those strange, starved days at school; of the desire (almost amounting to illness) of expressing herself in some way,—writing or drawing; of her weakened eyesight, which prevented her doing anything for two years, from the age of seventeen to nineteen; of her being a governess. . . . We have generally had another walk before tea, which is at six; at half-past eight, prayers; and by nine, all the household are in bed, except ourselves. We sit up together till ten, or past; and after I go, I hear Miss Bronte come down and walk up and down the room for an hour or so."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 297—300.

This was the aspect of her home when cheered by the presence of a congenial friend; but that was not often; and we read admissions "of solitude fearfully aggravating other evils;" of a craving for support and companionship, such as could not be expressed; "of sitting day after day in her chair, saddest memories her only company;" allowing her mind to range over immoral or sceptical literature as a change for her own thoughts; and yet resolved to stay, refusing every kind solicitation of friendship; restricting herself even in the pleasures of correspondence, lest letters should interfere with the exclusive claims of home, from a mingled sense of duty and fatalism. We cannot judge depression and lowness of spirits, otherwise we should say that what she now wanted was an object of faith out of herself; her rigid, restricted, partial notion of duty was a sort of heathen god to her and held her down. Her mind needed to be taken upwards, away and far above perpetual self-questioning. Temptations came with solitude, in the shape of gloomy earth-born musings, standing alike in the light of human and divine comfort. How true is it that extraordinary gifts are a gift to the world and not to their possessor; and that those who amuse, rouse, and divert others often sink for

the want of their own stimulants! So poor Charlotte Brontë sat at home, alone, late, late into the night, conversing with the spirits of the dead, and longing for them, till their voices seemed to reach her ears in the wild storms of wind that raged around. She had such fancies; when some one objected to the supernatural summons in "*Jane Eyre*," where Rochester calls her miles away, she replied in a low voice, and drawing her breath, "But it is a true thing; it really happened." All her life she had shuddered at death. She thought of it only as "cold obstruction." Though living in a churchyard, she could not, as a girl, walk over a grave unawares without turning faint. The loss of an acquaintance made a ghastly void which she feared to think of. Her realizing power was her tyrant—for such a nature and temperament as hers, solitude was terrible.

But now came a real legitimate diversion from loneliness and gloom—not in fame and success, which only brought a transient and fitful relief, but in a straightforward proposal of marriage, made, not in admiration of her genius, but herself. In her heart she did not care for being thought *clever*—she thought the term meant "a shrewd, very ugly, meddling, talking woman;" but here was one who loved her for herself, at an age when women value and are more grateful for attachment than in youth. However, Mr. Brontë liked things to go on as they had done. He objected to his curate's marrying his daughter; and the exemplary daughter of thirty-seven submitted to his decision, and dismissed her lover. She could not vex *him* by her opposition to whom she had shown implicit obedience her whole life. We are not told how, after some months, the subject was revived, and the father's consent obtained, not for his daughter to leave him, but for her husband to share her charge—a charge which he felt so binding, that when subsequently he was offered a living he declined it, as feeling bound to Haworth while Mr. Brontë lived. In brief terms we are told of Charlotte Brontë's wedding-day, the only witnesses her two oldest friends, Miss Wooler and E., of whom we have heard so much. The father had a consistent return of reluctance at the last moment, which made him, we have no doubt characteristically enough, refuse to be present. So Miss Wooler, in the emergency, had to give her faithful friend

and pupil away. It is one of Charlotte's best traits, her keeping up a lasting steady friendship with this good lady. She was married June 29, 1854. Then follow the simple mention of months of great happiness and remarkable contrast to a life of trial and depression, too soon brought to an end by some imprudence of over-exertion.

"Soon after her return, she was attacked by new sensations of perpetual nausea, and ever-recurring faintness. After this state of things had lasted for some time, she yielded to Mr. Nicholls' wish that a doctor should be sent for. He came, and assigned a natural cause for her miserable indisposition; a little patience and all would go right. She, who was ever patient in illness, tried hard to bear up and bear on. But the dreadful sickness increased and increased, till the very sight of food occasioned nausea. 'A wren would have starved on what she ate during those last six weeks,' says one. Tabby's health had suddenly and utterly given way, and she died in this time of distress and anxiety respecting the last daughter of the house she had served so long. Martha tenderly waited on her mistress, and from time to time tried to cheer her with the thought of the baby that was coming. 'I dare say I shall be glad sometime,' she would say; 'but I am so ill—so weary—' Then she took to her bed, too weak to sit up."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 321, 322.

Two last letters are given to her friend E.—and a Brussels schoolfellow. In the last she speaks of her father—"of course I could not leave *him*,"—and her husband, "No better, fonder husband than mine it seems to me there can be in the world—"I do not want now for companionship in health and the tenderest nursing in sickness;" and then in a very few weeks the end came.

"About the third week in March there was a change; a low wandering delirium came on; and in it she begged constantly for food and even for stimulants. She swallowed eagerly now; but it was too late. Wakening for an instant from this stupor of intelligence, she saw her husband's woe-worn face, and caught the sound of some murmured words of prayer that God would spare her. 'Oh!' she whispered forth, 'I am not going to die, am I? He will not separate us, we have been so happy.'

"Early on Saturday morning, March 31st, the solemn tolling of Haworth church-bell spoke forth the fact of her death to the villagers who had known her from a child, and whose hearts shivered within them as they thought of the two sitting desolate and alone in the old grey house."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 324.

Who can sum up such a character? who can reconcile its contradictions, account for its eccentricities, nicely discriminate and mark out its good and evil, bring the whole nature into harmony? We have not attempted the task. A strong original character vividly portrayed has its lesson, whether we fully understand and master it or not. If to some we have seemed over-lenient to certain grave errors it discloses, to them we would protest that our tenderness has not been won by mere admiration for strength of intellect; but we cannot realize the contrast and almost antagonism between mind and temperament, without perceiving a force of temptation and trial to which few are exposed, and respecting, and even reverencing accordingly, that sense of duty, dim and narrow as it often was, which directed her daily steps and influenced her whole existence. How can we do otherwise than pity that life of "labor and pain," where duty was a harsh master, and gave so few rewards; and trust that in the period of late happiness which preceded her end, she may have been guided to the easy yoke and light burden which should have been her service in the heat of her dreary day.

We have already commented on the one great blot and failure on Mrs. Gaskell's part. As a work of art, this biography cannot be too highly commended. When we consider how her task must have appeared to herself at its commencement, what small store of incident lay before her out of which to frame a narrative, how uneventful and externally insignificant was the life given her to portray, we own we wonder at her courage and success. When some local worthy passes from the scene, prominent, almost necessary, in his own sphere, and his friends contemplate the gap and loss, it is a universal impulse to write his life. One so important, so loved, so missed, should not be forgotten. The world must certainly be told of his excellencies, and learn to know him. So Mr. So-and-so is deputed to write a biography. If this gentleman is a dull man, he probably accomplishes his task, and does not know that he has

failed. Our readers may guess how Miss Bronte would fare under his hands. If he has taste, experience, and discernment, he presently becomes aware that this life, so impressive in its sphere, presents, under his handling, no points sufficiently distinguishing to awake new interest. Peculiar traits so pleasing to friends cannot be conveyed to strangers. The good deeds are commonplace where the face, and form, and voice that set them off, are away. He feels that so far from doing honor to the dead, he would be committing the injustice of exposing him to an unfair ordeal, of parading him where he was not understood or cared for. And after weighing and deliberating for a sufficient length of time, he comes to the conclusion that most men's lives are to be witnessed, not recorded; that their example is for their own generation, not a future one. Mrs. Gaskell understood her work better, and realized from the first what she had to do—not the comparatively easy task of recording events, but delineating a character without the aids which incidents and adventure always furnish. Impressed by her subject, she was roused rather than repelled by its difficulties. Her fellow-feeling as an authoress, her tenderness as a friend, sympathy and admiration, pity, resentment, all stimulated her to the effort—for an effort it must have been—of presenting this various, contradictory, yet strong, interesting and remarkable woman, to the world. The wants and voids of that mind she could not feel as we must feel them. Therefore she is sustained throughout by undoubted reliance on the intrinsic excellence as well as genius of her subject, and rejoices to bring all her own powers to her task. And admirably suited they are to the purpose—her pathos, her romance, her graphic descriptions, her skill in drawing character, her singular felicity of arrangement and combination, all join to produce a picture harmonious, thrilling, impressive; which, if it rouses criticism, demands attention, and compels interest, and forms, as every forcible history of an original mind must do, a valuable addition to the world's experience.

PART IV.—CHAPTER XV.

THE stony street, the bitter north-east wind and darkness—and in the midst of them a tender woman thrust out from her husband's home in her thin night-dress, the harsh wind cutting her naked feet, and driving her long hair away from her half-clad bosom, where the poor heart is crushed with anguish and despair.

The drowning man, urged by the supreme agony, lives in an instant through all his happy and unhappy past: when the dark flood has fallen like a curtain, memory, in a single moment, sees the drama acted over again. And even in those earlier crises, which are but types of death—when we are cut off abruptly from the life we have known, when we can no longer expect to-morrow to resemble yesterday, and find ourselves by some sudden shock on the confines of the unknown—there is often the same sort of lightning-flash through the dark and unfrequented chambers of memory.

When Janet sat down shivering on the door-stone, with the door shut upon her past life, and the future black and unshapen before her as the night, the scenes of her childhood, her youth, and her painful womanhood, rushed back upon her consciousness, and made one picture with her present desolation. The petted child taking her newest toy to bed with her—the young girl, proud in strength and beauty, dreaming that life was an easy thing, and that it was a pitiful weakness to be unhappy—the bride, passing with trembling joy from the outer court to the the inner sanctuary of woman's life—the wife, beginning her initiation into sorrow, wounded, resenting, yet still hoping and forgiving—the poor bruised woman, seeking through weary years the one refuge of despair, oblivion:—Janet seemed to herself all these in the same moment that she was conscious of being seated on the cold stone under the shock of a new misery. All her early gladness, all her bright hopes and illusions, all her gifts of beauty and affection, served only to darken the riddle of her life: they were the betraying promises of a cruel destiny which had brought out those sweet blossoms only that the winds and the storms might have a greater work of desolation, which had nursed her like a pet fawn into tenderness and fond expectation, only that she might feel a keener terror in the clutch of the panther. Her

mother had sometimes said that troubles were sent to make us better and draw us nearer to God. What mockery that seemed to Janet! Her troubles had been sinking her lower from year to year, pressing upon her like heavy fever-laden vapors, and perverting the very plentitude of her nature into a deeper source of disease. Her wretchedness had been a perpetually tightening instrument of torture, which had gradually absorbed all the other sensibilities of her nature into the sense of pain and the maddened craving for relief. O, if some ray of hope, of pity, of consolation, would pierce through the horrible gloom, she might believe *then* in a Divine love—in a heavenly Father who cared for His children! But now she had no faith, no trust. There was nothing she could lean on in the wide world, for her mother was only a fellow-sufferer in her own lot. The poor patient woman could do little more than mourn with her daughter: she had humble resignation enough to sustain her own soul, but she could no more give comfort and fortitude to Janet, than the withered ivy-covered trunk can bear up its strong, full-boughed off-spring crashing down under an Alpine storm. Janet felt she was alone: no human soul had measured her anguish, had understood her self-despair, had entered into her sorrows and her sins with that deep-sighted sympathy which is wiser than all blame, more potent than all reproof—such sympathy as had swelled her own heart for many a sufferer. And if there was any Divine Pity, she could not feel it: it kept aloof from her, it poured no balm into her wounds, it stretched out no hand to bear up her weak resolve, to fortify her fainting courage.

Now, in her utmost loneliness, she shed no tear: she sat staring fixedly into the darkness, while inwardly she gazed at her own past, almost losing the sense that it was her own, or that she was any thing more than a spectator at a strange and dreadful play.

The loud sound of the church clock striking one, startled her. She had not been there more than half an hour, then? And it seemed to her as if she had been there half the night. She was getting benumbed with cold. With that strong instinctive dread of pain and death which had made her recoil from suicide, she started up, and the disagreeable sensation of resting on her benumbed feet helped to recall her completely to the

JANET'S REPENTANCE.

sense of the present. The wind was beginning to make rents in the clouds, and there came every now and then a dim light of stars that frightened her more than the darkness; it was like a cruel finger pointing her out in her wretchedness and humiliation; it made her shudder at the thought of the morning twilight. What could she do? Not go to her mother—not rouse her in the dead of night to tell her this. Her mother would think she was a spectre; it would be enough to kill her with horror. And the way there was so long . . . if she should meet some one . . . yet she must seek some shelter, somewhere to hide herself. Five doors off there was Mrs. Pettifer's; that kind woman would take her in. It was of no use now to be proud and mind about the world's knowing: she had nothing to wish for, nothing to care about: only she could not help shuddering at the thought of braving the morning light there in the street—she was frightened at the thought of spending long hours in the cold. Life might mean anguish, might mean despair; but—O, she must clutch it, though with bleeding fingers: her feet must cling to the firm earth that the sun-light would revisit, not slip into the untried abyss, where she might long even for familiar pains.

Janet trod slowly with her naked feet on the rough pavement, trembling at the fitful gleams of star-light, and supporting herself by the wall, as the gusts of wind drove right against her. The very wind was cruel: it tried to push her back from the door where she wanted to go and knock and ask for pity.

Mrs. Pettifer's house did not look into Orchard Street: it stood a little way up a wide passage which opened into the street through an archway. Janet turned up the archway, and saw a faint light coming from Mrs. Pettifer's bedroom window. The glimmer of a rushlight from a room where a friend was lying, was like a ray of mercy to Janet, after that long, long time of darkness and loneliness; it would not be so dreadful to awake Mrs. Pettifer as she had thought. Yet she lingered some minutes at the door before she gathered courage to knock; she felt as if the sound must betray her to others besides Mrs. Pettifer, though there was no other dwelling that opened into the passage—only warehouses and outbuildings. There was no gravel for her to throw up at the window, nothing but heavy pavement; there

was no door-bell; she must knock. Her first rap was very timid—one feeble fall of the knocker; and then she stood still again for many minutes; but presently she rallied her courage and knocked several times together, not loudly, but rapidly, so that Mrs. Pettifer if she only heard the sound could not mistake it. And she *had* heard it, for by-and-by the casement of her window was opened, and Janet perceived that she was bending out to try and discern who was at the door.

"It is I, Mrs. Pettifer; it is Janet Dempster. Take me in, for pity's sake."

"Merciful God! what has happened?"

"Robert has turned me out. I have been in the cold a long while."

Mrs. Pettifer said no more, but hurried away from the window, and was soon at the door with a light in her hand.

"Come in my poor dear, come in," said the good woman in a tremulous voice, drawing Janet within the door. "Come into my warm bed, and may God in heaven save and comfort you."

The pitying eyes, the tender voice, the warm touch, caused a rush of new feeling in Janet. Her heart swelled, and she burst out suddenly, like a child, into loud, passionate sobs. Mrs. Pettifer could not help crying with her, but she said "Come up-stairs, my dear, come. Don't linger in the cold."

She drew the poor, sobbing thing gently up-stairs, and persuaded her to get into the warm bed. But it was long before Janet could lie down. She sat leaning her head on her knees, convulsed by sobs, while the motherly woman covered her with clothes and held her arms round her to comfort her with warmth. At last the hysterical passion had exhausted itself, and she fell back on the pillow; but her throat was still agitated by piteous after-sobs, such as shake a little child even when it has found refuge from its alarms on its mother's lap.

Now Janet was getting quieter, Mrs. Pettifer determined to go down and make a cup of tea, the first thing a kind old woman thinks of as a solace and restorative under all calamities. Happily there was no danger of awaking her servant, a heavy girl of sixteen, who was snoring blissfully in the attic, and might be kept ignorant of the way in which Mrs. Dempster had come in. So Mrs. Pettifer busied herself with rousing the kitched fire, which was kept in under a huge

"raker"—a possibility by which the coal of the midland counties atones for all its slowness and white ashes.

When she carried up the tea, Janet was lying quite still; the spasmodic agitation had ceased, and she seemed lost in thought; her eyes were fixed vacantly on the rushlight shade, and all the lines of sorrow were deepened in her face.

"Now, my dear," said Mrs. Pettifer, "let me persuade you to drink a cup of tea, you'll find it warm you and soothe you very much. Why, dear heart, your feet are like ice still. Now, do drink this tea, and I'll wrap 'em up in flannel, and then they'll get warm."

Janet turned her dark eyes on her old friend and stretched out her arms. She was too much oppressed to say anything; her suffering lay like a heavy weight on her power of speech; but she wanted to kiss the good, kind woman. Mrs. Pettifer, setting down the cup, bent towards the sad, beautiful face, and Janet kissed her with earnest sacramental kisses—such kisses as seal a new and closer bond between the helper and the helped.

She drank the tea obediently. "It *does* arm me," she said. "But now you will get into bed. I shall lie still now."

Mrs. Pettifer felt it was the best thing she could do to lie down quietly, and say no more. She hoped Janet might go to sleep. As for herself, with that tendency to wakefulness common to advanced years, she found it impossible to compose herself to sleep again after this agitating surprise. She lay listening to the clock, wondering what had led to this new outrage of Dempster's, praying for the poor thing at her side, and pitying the mother who would have to hear it all to-morrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

JANET lay still, as she had promised; but the tea, which had warmed her and given her a sense of greater bodily ease, had only heightened the previous excitement of her brain. Her ideas had a new vividness, which made her feel as if she had only seen life through a dim haze before; her thoughts, instead of springing from the action of her own mind, were external existences, that thrust themselves imperiously upon her like haunting visions. The future took shape after shape of misery before her, always ending in her being dragged back again to her old life of terror, and stupor, and fevered

despair. Her husband had so long overshadowed her life that her imagination could not keep hold of a condition in which that great dread was absent; and even his absence—what was it? only a dreary, vacant flat, where where there was nothing to strive after, nothing to long for.

At last, the light of morning quenched the rushlight, and Janet's thoughts became more and more fragmentary and confused. She was every moment slipping off the level on which she lay thinking, down, down into some depth from which she tried to rise again with a start. Slumber was stealing over her weary brain; that uneasy slumber which is only better than wretched waking, because the life we seem to live in it determines no wretched future, because the things we do and suffer in it are but hateful shadows, and leave no impress that petrifies into an irrevocable past.

She had scarcely been asleep an hour when her movements became more violent, her mutterings more frequent and agitated, till at last she started up with a smothered cry, and looked wildly round her shaking with terror.

"Don't be frightened, dear Mrs. Dempster," said Mrs. Pettifer, who was up and dressing, "you are with me, your old friend, Mrs. Pettifer. Nothing will harm you."

Janet sank back again on her pillow, still trembling. After lying silent a little while, she said, "It was a horrible dream. Dear Mrs. Pettifer don't let any one know I am here. Keep it a secret. If he finds out he will come and drag me back again."

"No, my dear, depend on me. I've just thought, I shall send the servant home on a holiday—I've promised her a good while. I'll send her away as soon as she's had her breakfast, and she'll have no occasion to know you're here. There's no holding servants' tongues, if you let 'em know any thing. What they don't know, they won't tell; you may trust 'em so far. But shouldn't you like me to go and fetch your mother?"

"No, not yet, not yet. I can't bear to see her yet."

"Well, it shall be just as you like. Now try and get to sleep again. I shall leave you for an hour or two, and send off Phoebe. and then bring you some breakfast. I'll lock the door behind me, so as the girl may-n't come in by chance."

The daylight changes the aspect of misery

to us, as of every thing else. In the night it presses on our imagination—the forms it takes are false, fitful, exaggerated; in broad day it sickens our sense with the dreary persistence of definite measurable reality. The man who looks with ghastly horror on all his property aflame in the dead of night, has not half the sense of destitution he will have in the morning, when he walks over the ruins lying blackened in the pitiless sunshine. That moment of intensest depression had come to Janet, when the daylight which showed her the walls, and chairs, and tables, and all the commonplace reality that surrounded her, seemed to lay bare the future too, and bring out into oppressive distinctness all the details of a weary life to be lived from day to day, with no hope to strengthen her against that evil habit, which she loathed in retrospect and yet was powerless to resist. Her husband would never consent to her living away from him: she was become necessary to his tyranny; he would never willingly loosen his grasp on her. She had a vague notion of some protection the law might give her, if she could prove her life in danger from him; but she shrank utterly, as she had always done, from any active, public resistance or vengeance: she felt too crushed, too faulty, too liable to reproach, to have the courage, even if she had had the wish, to put herself openly in the position of a wronged woman seeking redress. She had no strength to sustain her in a course of self-defence and independence: there was a darker shadow over her life than the dread of her husband—it was the shadow of self-despair. The easiest thing would be to go away and hide herself from him. But then there was her mother: Robert had all her little property in his hands, and that little was scarcely enough to keep her in comfort without his aid. If Janet went away alone, he would be sure to persecute her mother; and if she *did* go away—what then? She must work to maintain herself, she must exert herself, weary and hopeless as she was, to begin life afresh. How hard that seemed to her! Janet's nature did not belie her grand face and form: there was energy, there was strength in it; but it was the strength of the vine, which must have its broad leaves and rich clusters borne up by a firm stay. And now she had nothing to rest on—no faith, no love. If her mother had been very feeble, aged, or

sickly, Janet's deep pity and tenderness might have made a daughter's duties an interest and a solace; but Mrs. Raynor had never needed tendance; she had always been giving help to her daughter; she had always been a sort of humble, ministering spirit; and it was one of Janet's bitter pangs of memory, that instead of being her mother's comfort, she had been her mother's trial. Everywhere the same sadness! Her life was a sundried, barren track, where there was no shadow, and where all the waters were bitter.

No! She suddenly thought—and the thought—was like an electric shock—there was one spot in her memory which seemed to promise her an untried spring, where the waters might be sweet. That short interview with Mr. Tryan had come back upon her—his voice, his words, his look, which told her that he knew sorrow. His words had implied that he thought his death was near; yet he had a faith which enabled him to labor—enabled him to give comfort to others. That look of his came back on her with a vividness greater than it had had for her in reality: surely he knew more of the secrets of sorrow than other men; perhaps he had some message of comfort, different from the feeble words she had been used to hear from others. She was tired, she was sick of that barren exhortation—Do right, and keep a clear conscience, and God will reward you, and your troubles will be easier to bear. She wanted *strength* to do right—she wanted something to rely on besides her own resolutions; for was not the path behind her all strewn with *broken* resolutions? How could she trust in new ones? She had often heard Mr. Tryan laughed at for being fond of great sinners. She began to see a new meaning in those words; he would perhaps understand her helplessness, her wants. If she could pour out her heart to him! if she could for the first time in her life unlock all the chambers of her soul!

The impulse to confession almost always requires the presence of a fresh ear and a fresh heart; and in our moments of spiritual need, the man to whom we have no tie but our common nature, seems nearer to us than mother, brother, or friend. Our daily familiar life is but a hiding of ourselves from each other behind a screen of trivial words and deeds, and those who sit with us at the same

hearth, are often the farthest off from the deep human soul within us, full of unspoken evil and unacted good.

When Mrs. Pettifer came back to her, turning the key and opening the door very gently, Janet, instead of being asleep, as her good friend had hoped, was intensely occupied with her new thought. She longed to ask Mrs. Pettifer if she could see Mr. Tryan; but she was arrested by doubts and timidity. He might not feel for her—he might be shocked at her confession—he might talk to her of doctrines she could not understand or believe. She could not make up her mind yet; but she was too restless under this mental struggle to remain in bed.

"Mrs. Pettifer," she said, "I can't lie here any longer; I must get up. Will you lend me some clothes?"

Wrapt in such drapery as Mrs. Pettifer could find for her tall figure, Janet went down into the little parlor, and tried to take some of the breakfast her friend had prepared for her. But her effort was not a successful one; her cup of tea and bit of toast were only half finished. The leaden weight of discouragement pressed upon her more and more heavily. The wind had fallen, and a drizzling rain had come on; there was no prospect from Mrs. Pettifer's parlor but a blank wall; and as Janet looked out at the window, the rain and the smoke-blackened bricks seemed to blend themselves in sickening identity with her desolation of spirit and the headachy weariness of her body.

Mrs. Pettifer got through her household work as soon as she could, and sat down with her sewing, hoping that Janet would perhaps be able to talk a little of what had passed, and find some relief by unbosoming herself in that way. But Janet could not speak to her; she was importuned with the longing to see Mr. Tryan, and yet hesitating to express it.

Two hours passed in this way. The rain went on drizzling, and Janet sat still, leaning her aching head on her hand, and looking alternately at the fire and out of the window. She felt this could not last—this motionless, vacant misery. She must determine on something, she must take some step; and yet every thing was so difficult.

It was one o'clock, and Mrs. Pettifer rose from her seat, saying, "I must go and see about dinner."

The movement and the sound startled Janet from her reverie. It seemed as if an opportunity were escaping her, and she said hastily, "Is Mr. Tryan in the town to-day, do you think?"

"No, I should think not, being Saturday, you know," said Mrs. Pettifer, her face lighting up with pleasure; "but he *would* come, if he was sent for. I can send Jesson's boy with a note to him any time. Should you like to see him?"

"Yes, I think I should."

"Then I'll send for him this instant."

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN Dempster awoke in the morning, he was at no loss to account to himself for the fact that Janet was not by his side. His hours of drunkenness were not cut off from his other hours by any blank wall of oblivion; he remembered what Janet had done to offend him the evening before, he remembered what he had done to her at midnight, just as he would have remembered if he had been consulted about a right of road.

The remembrance gave him a definite ground for the extra ill-humor which had attended his waking every morning this week. but he would not admit to himself that it cost him any anxiety. "Pooh," he said inwardly, "she would go straight to her mother's. She's as timid as a hare; and she'll never let anybody know about it. She'll be back again before night."

But it would be as well for the servants not to know any thing of the affair; so he collected the clothes she had taken off the night before, and threw them into a fire-proof closet of which he always kept the key in his pocket. When he went down stairs he said to the housemaid, "Mrs. Dempster is gone to her mother's; bring in the breakfast."

The servants, accustomed to hear domestic broils, and to see their mistress put on her bonnet hastily and go to her mother's, thought it only something a little worse than usual that she should have gone thither in consequence of a violent quarrel, either at midnight, or in the early morning before they were up. The housemaid told the cook what she supposed had happened; the cook shook her head and said, "Eh, dear, dear!" but they both expected to see their mistress back again in an hour or two.

Dempster, on his return home the evening

before, had ordered his man, who lived away from the house, to bring up his horse and gig from the stables at ten. After breakfast he said to the housemaid, "No one need sit up for me to-night; I shall not be at home till to-morrow evening;" and then he walked to the office to give some orders, expecting, as he returned, to see the man waiting with his gig. But though the church clock had struck ten, no gig was there. In Dempster's mood this was more than enough to exasperate him. He went in to take his accustomed glass of brandy before setting out, promising himself the satisfaction of presently thundering at Dawes for being a few minutes behind his time. An outbreak of temper towards his man was not common with him; for Dempster, like most tyrannous people, had that dastardly kind of self-restraint which enabled him to control his temper where it suited his own convenience to do so; and feeling the value of Dawes, a steady punctual fellow, he not only gave him high wages, but usually treated him with exceptional civility. This morning, however, ill-humor got the better of prudence, and Dempster was determined to rate him soundly; a resolution for which Dawes gave him much better ground than he expected. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, had passed, and Dempster was setting off to the stables in a back street to see what was the cause of the delay, when Dawes appeared with the gig.

"What the devil do you keep me here for?" thundered Dempster, "kicking my heels like a beggarly tailor waiting for a carrier's cart? I ordered you to be here at ten. We might have driven to Whitlow by this time."

"Why, one o' the traces was welly i' two, an' I had to tek it to Brady's to be mended, an' he didn't get it done i' time."

"Then why didn't you take it to him last night? Because of your damned laziness, I suppose. Do you think I give you wages for you to choose your own hours, and come daudling up a quarter of an hour after my time?"

"Come, give me good words, will yer?" said Dawes, sulkily. "I'm not lazy, nor no man shall call me lazy. I know well anuff what you give me wages for; it's for doin' what yer won't find many men as 'ull do."

"What, you impudent scoundrel," said Dempster, getting into the gig, "you think

you are necessary to me, do you? As if a beastly bucket carrying idiot like you wasn't to be got any day. Look out for a new master, then, who'll pay you for not doing as you're bid."

Dawes' blood was now fairly up. "I'll look out for a master as has got a better charicter nor a lyin, bletherin' drunkard, an' I shouldn't have to go fur."

Dempster, furious, snatched the whip from the socket, and gave Dawes a cut, which he meant to fall across his shoulders, saying "Take that, sir, and go to hell with you!"

Dawes was in the act of turning with the reins in his hand when the lash fell, and the cut went across his face. With white lips, he said, "I'll hev the law on yer for that, lawyer as yer are," and threw the reins on the horse's back.

Dempster leaned forward, seized the reins, and drove off.

"Why, there's your friend Dempster driving out without his man again," said Mr. Luke Byles, who was chatting with Mr. Budd in the Bridge Way. "What a fool he is to drive that two-wheeled thing! he'll get pitched on his head one of these days."

"Not he," said Mr. Budd, nodding to Dempster as he passed; "he's got nine lives, Dempster has."

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was dusk and the candles were lighted before Mr. Tryan knocked at Mrs. Pettifer's door. Her messenger had brought back word that he was not at home, and all the afternoon Janet had been agitated by the fear that he would not come; but as soon as that anxiety was removed by the knock at the door, she felt a sudden rush of doubt and timidity: she trembled and turned cold.

Mrs. Pettifer went to open the door, and told Mr. Tryan, in as few words as possible, what had happened in the night. As he laid down his hat and prepared to enter the parlor, she said, "I won't go in with you, for I think perhaps she would rather see you go in alone."

Janet, wrapped up in a large white shawl which threw her dark face into startling relief, was seated with her eyes turned anxiously towards the door when Mr. Tryan entered. He had not seen her since their interview at Sally Martin's long months ago; and he felt a strong movement of compassion at the sight of the pain-stricken face which

seemed to bear written on it the signs of all Janet's intervening misery. Her heart gave a great leap, as her eyes met his once more. No! she had not deceived herself; there was all the sincerity, all the sadness, all the deep pity in them her memory had told her of; more than it had told her, for in proportion as his face had become thinner and more worn, his eyes appeared to have gathered intensity.

He came forward, and, putting out his hand, said, "I am so glad you sent for me—I am so thankful you thought I could be any comfort to you." Janet took his hand in silence. She was unable to utter any words of mere politeness, or even of gratitude; her heart was too full of other words that had welled up the moment she met his pitying glance, and felt her doubts fall away.

They sat down opposite each other, and she said in a low voice, while slow difficult tears gathered in her aching eyes:—

"I want to tell you how unhappy I am—how weak and wicked. I feel no strength to live or die. I thought you could tell me something that would help me." She paused.

"Perhaps I can," Mr. Tryan said, "for in speaking to me you are speaking to a fellow-sinner who has needed just the comfort and help you are needing."

"And you did find it?"

"Yes; and I trust you will find it."

"O, I should like to be good and to do right," Janet burst forth, "but indeed, indeed, my lot has been a very hard one. I loved my husband very dearly when we were married, and I meant to make him happy—I wanted nothing else. But he began to be angry with me for little things and I don't want to accuse him but he drank and got more and more unkind to me, and then very cruel, and he beat me. And that cut me to the heart. It made me almost mad sometimes to think all our love had come to that I couldn't bear up against it. I had never been used to drink any thing but water. I hated wine and spirits because Robert drank them so; but one day when I was very wretched, and the wine was standing on the table, I suddenly I can hardly remember how I came to do it I poured some wine into a large glass and drank it. It blunted my feelings, and made me more indifferent. After that, the temptation was always coming, and it got stronger and

stronger. I was ashamed, and I hated what I did; but almost while the thought was passing through my mind that I would never do it again, I did it. It seemed as if there was a demon in me always making me rush to do what I longed not to do. And I thought all the more that God was cruel; for if He had not sent me that dreadful trial, so much worse than other women have to bear, I should not have done wrong in that way. I suppose it is wicked to think so I feel as if there must be goodness and right above us, but I can't see it, I can't trust in it. And I have gone on in that way for years and years. At one time it used to be better now and then, but everything has got worse lately; I felt sure it must soon end some time. And last night he turned me out of doors. . . . I don't know what to do. I will never go back to that life again if I can help it; and yet everything else seems so miserable. I feel sure that demon will be always urging me to satisfy the craving that comes upon me, and the days will go on as they have done through all those miserable years. I shall always be doing wrong, and hating myself after—sinking lower and lower, and knowing that I am sinking. O can you tell me any way of getting strength? Have you ever known any one like me that got peace of mind and power to do right? Can you give me any comfort—any hope?"

While Janet was speaking, she had forgotten everything but her misery and her yearning for comfort. Her voice had risen from the low tone of timid distress to an intense pitch of imploring anguish. She clasped her hands tightly, and looked at Mr. Tryan with eager questioning eyes, with parted, trembling lips, with the deep horizontal lines of overmastering pain on her brow. In this artificial life of ours, it is not often we see a human face with all a heart's agony in it, uncontrolled by self-consciousness; when we do see it, it startles us as if we had suddenly waked into the real world of which this every day one is but a puppet-show copy. For some moments Mr. Tryan was too deeply moved to speak.

"Yes, dear Mrs. Dempster," he said at last, "there is comfort, there is hope for you. Believe me there is, for I speak from my own deep and hard experience." He paused, as if he had not made up his mind to utter the words that were urging themselves to his lips. Presently he continued, "Ten years

ago, I felt as wretched as you do. I think my wretchedness was even worse than yours, for I had a heavier sin on my conscience. I had suffered no wrong from others as you have, and I had injured another irreparably in body and soul. The image of the wrong I had done pursued me everywhere, and I seemed on the brink of madness. I hated my life, for I thought, just as you do, that I should go on falling into temptation and doing more harm in the world; and I dreaded death, for with that sense of guilt on my soul, I felt that whatever state I entered on must be one of misery. But a dear friend to whom I opened my mind showed me it was just such as I—the helpless who feel themselves helpless—that God specially invites to come to Him, and offers all the riches of His salvation: not forgiveness only; forgiveness would be worth little if it left us under the powers of our evil passions; but strength—that strength which enables us to conquer sin.”

“But,” said Janet, “I can feel no trust in God. He seems always to have left me to myself. I have sometimes prayed to Him to help me, and yet everything has been just the same as before. If you felt like me, how did you come to have hope and trust?”

“Do not believe that God has left you to yourself. How can you tell but that the hardest trials you have known have been only the road by which He was leading you to that complete sense of your own sin and helplessness, without which you would never have renounced all other hopes, and trusted in His love alone? I know, dear Mrs. Dempster, I know it is hard to bear. I would not speak lightly of your sorrows. I feel that the mystery of our life is great, and at one time it seemed as dark to me as it does to you.”

Mr. Tryan hesitated again. He saw that the first thing Janet needed was to be assured of sympathy. She must be made to feel that her anguish was not strange to him; that he entered into the only half-expressed secrets of her spiritual weakness, before any other message of consolation could find its way to her heart. The tale of the divine pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity, and Janet's anguish was not strange to Mr. Tryan. He had never been in the presence of a sorrow and a self-despair that had sent so strong a thrill through all the recesses of his saddest

experience; and it is because sympathy is but a living again through our own past in a new form, that confession often prompts a response of confession. Mr. Tryan felt this prompting, and his judgment too told him that in obeying it he would be taking the best means of administering comfort to Janet. Yet he hesitated, as we tremble to let in the daylight on a chamber of relics which we have never visited except in curtained silence. But the first impulse triumphed, and he went on. “I had lived all my life at a distance from God. My youth was spent in thoughtless self-indulgence, and all my hopes were of a vain worldly kind. I had no thought of entering the Church; I looked forward to a political career, for my father was private secretary to a man high in the Whig Ministry, and had been promised strong interest in my behalf. At college I lived in intimacy with the gayest men, even adopting follies and vices for which I had no taste, out of mere pliancy and the love of standing well with my companions. You see, I was more guilty even then than you have been, for I threw away all the rich blessings of untroubled youth and health; I had no excuse in my outward lot. But while I was at college that event in my life occurred, which in the end brought on the state of mind I have mentioned to you—the state of self-reproach and despair, which enables me to understand to the full what you are suffering; and I tell you the facts, because I want you to be assured that I am not uttering mere vague words when I say that I have been raised from as low a depth of sin and sorrow as that in which you feel yourself to be. At college I had an attachment to a lovely girl of seventeen: she was very much below my own station in life, and I never contemplated marrying her; but I induced her to leave her father's house. I did not mean to forsake her when I left college, and I quieted all scruples of conscience by promising myself that I would always take care of poor Lucy. But on my return from a vacation spent in travelling, I found that Lucy was gone—gone away with a gentleman, her neighbors said. I was a good deal distressed, but I tried to persuade myself that no harm would come to her. Soon afterwards I had an illness which left my health delicate, and made all dissipation distasteful to me. Life seemed very wearisome and empty, and I looked with

envy on every one who had some great and absorbing object—even on my cousin who was preparing to go out as a missionary, and whom I had been used to think a dismal, tedious person, because he was constantly urging religious subjects upon me. We were living in London then; it was three years since I had lost sight of Lucy; and one summer evening about nine o'clock, as I was walking along Gower Street, I saw a knot of people on the causeway before me. As I came up to them, I heard one woman say, 'I tell you, she's dead.' This awakened my interest, and I pushed my way within the circle. The body of a woman, dressed in fine clothes, was lying against a door-step. Her head was bent on one side, and the long curls had fallen over her cheek. A tremor seized me when I saw the hair: it was light chestnut—the color of Lucy's. I knelt down and turned aside the hair; it was Lucy—dead—with paint on her cheeks. I found out afterwards that she had taken poison—that she was in the power of a wicked woman—that the very clothes on her back were not her own. It was then that my past life burst upon me in all its hideousness. I wished I had never been born. I couldn't look into the future. Lucy's dead painted face would follow me there, as it did when I looked back into the past—as it did when I sat down to table with my friends, when I lay down in my bed, and when I rose up. There was only one thing that could make life tolerable to me; that was, to spend all the rest of it in trying to save others from the ruin I had brought on one. But how was that possible for me? I had no comfort, no strength, no wisdom in my own soul; how could I give them to others? My mind was dark, rebellious, at war with itself and with God."

Mr. Tryan had been looking away from Janet. His face was towards the fire, and he was absorbed in the images his memory was recalling. But now he turned his eyes on her, and they met hers, fixed on him with the look of rapt expectation with which one clinging to a slippery summit of rock, while the waves are rising higher and higher, watches the boat that has put from shore to his rescue.

"You see, Mrs. Dempster, how deep my need was. I went on in this way for months. I was convinced that if I ever got help and comfort, it must be from religion. I went to

hear celebrated preachers, and I read religious books. But I found nothing that fitted my own need. The faith which puts the sinner in possession of salvation seemed, as I understood it, to be quite out of my reach. I had no faith; I only felt utterly wretched, under the power of habits and dispositions which had wrought hideous evil. At last, as I told you, I found a friend to whom I opened all my feelings—to whom I confessed everything. He was a man who had gone through very deep experience, and could understand the different wants of different minds. He made it clear to me that the only preparation for coming to Christ and partaking of His salvation, was that very sense of guilt and helplessness which was weighing me down. He said, You are weary and heavy laden; well, it is you Christ invites to come to Him and find rest. He asks you to cling to Him, to lean on Him; He does not command you to walk alone without stumbling. He does not tell you, as your fellow-men do, that you must first merit His love; He neither condemns nor reproaches you for the past, He only bids you come to Him that you may have life: He bids you stretch out your hands, and take of the fulness of His love. You have only to rest on Him as a child rests on its mother's arms, and you will be upborne by His divine strength. That is what is meant by faith. Your evil habits, you feel, are too strong for you; you are unable to wrestle with them; you know beforehand you shall fall. But when once we feel our helplessness in that way, and go to Christ, desiring to be freed from the power as well as the punishment of sin, we are no longer left to our own strength. As long as we live in rebellion against God, desiring to have our own will, seeking happiness in the things of this world, it is as if we shut ourselves up in a crowded stifling room, where we breathe only poisoned air; but we have only to walk out under the infinite heavens, and we breathe the pure free air that gives us health, and strength, and gladness. It is just so with God's Spirit: as soon as we submit ourselves to His will, as soon as we desire to be united to Him, and made pure and holy, it is as if the walls had fallen down that shut us out from God, and we are fed with His Spirit which gives us new strength."

"That is what I want," said Janet. "I have left off minding about pleasure. I

think I could be contented in the midst of hardship, if I felt that God cared for me, and would give me strength to lead a pure life. But tell me, did you soon find peace and strength?"

"Not perfect peace for a long while, but hope and trust, which is strength. No sense of pardon for myself could do away with the pain I had in thinking what I had helped to bring on another. My friend used to urge upon me that my sin against God was greater than my sin against her; but—it may be from want of deeper spiritual feeling—that has remained to this hour the sin which causes me the bitterest pang. I could never rescue Lucy; but by God's blessing I might rescue other weak and falling souls; and that was why I entered the Church. I asked for nothing through the rest of my life but that I might be devoted to God's work, without swerving in search of pleasure either to the right hand or to the left. It has been often a hard struggle—but God has been with me—and perhaps it may not last much longer."

Mr. Tryan paused. For a moment he had forgotten Janet, and for a moment she had forgotten her own sorrows. When she returned to herself it was with a new feeling.

"Ah, what a difference between our lives! you have been choosing pain, and working, and denying yourself; and I have been thinking only of myself. I was only angry and discontented because I had pain to bear. You never had that wicked feeling that I have had so often, did you? that God was cruel to send me trials and temptations worse than others have."

"Yes, I had; I had very blasphemous thoughts, and I know that spirit of rebellion must have made the worst part of your lot. You did not feel how impossible it is for us to judge rightly of God's dealings, and you opposed yourself to His will. But what do we know? We cannot foretell the workings of the smallest event in our own lot: how can we presume to judge of things that are so much too high for us? There is nothing that becomes us but entire submission, perfect resignation. As long as we set up our own will and our own wisdom against God's, we make that wall between us and His love which I have spoken of just now. But as soon as we lay ourselves entirely at His feet, we have enough light given us to guide our own steps; as the foot-soldier who hears

nothing of the councils that determine the course of the great battle he is in, hears plainly enough the word of command which he must himself obey. I know, dear Mrs. Dempster, I know it is hard—the hardest thing of all, perhaps—to flesh and blood. But carry that difficulty to Christ along with all your other sins and weaknesses, and ask Him to pour into you a spirit of submission. He enters into your struggles; He has drunk the cup of our suffering to the dregs; He knows the hard wrestling it costs us to say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'

"Pray with me," said Janet—"pray now that I may have light and strength."

CHAPTER XIX.

BEFORE leaving Janet, Mr. Tryan urged her strongly to send for her mother.

"Do not wound her," he said, "by shutting her out any longer from your troubles. It is right that you should be with her."

"Yes, I will send for her," said Janet. "But I would rather not go to my mother's yet, because my husband is sure to think I am there, and he might come and fetch me. I can't go back to him at least, not yet. Ought I to go back to him?"

"No, certainly not, at present. Something should be done to secure you from violence. Your mother, I think, should consult some confidential friend, some man of character and experience, who might mediate between you and your husband."

"Yes, I will send for my mother directly. But I will stay here with Mrs. Pettifer, till something has been done. I want no one to know where I am, except you. You will come again, will you not? you will not leave me to myself?"

"You will not be left to yourself. God is with you. If I have been able to give you any comfort, it is because His power and love have been present with us. But I am very thankful that he has chosen to work through me. I shall see you again to-morrow—not before evening, for it will be Sunday, you know; but after the evening lecture I shall be at liberty. You will be in my prayers till then. In the mean time, dear Mrs. Dempster, open your heart as much as you can to your mother and Mrs. Pettifer. Cast away from you the pride that makes us shrink from acknowledging our weakness to our friends. Ask them to help you in guarding

yourself from the least approach of the sin you most dread. Deprive yourself as far as possible of the very means and opportunity of committing it. Every effort of that kind made in humility and dependence is a prayer. Promise me you will do this."

"Yes, I promise you. I know I have always been too proud; I could never bear to speak to any one about myself. I have been proud towards my mother, even; it has always made me angry when she has seemed to take notice of my faults."

"Ah, dear Mrs. Dempster, you will never say again that life is blank, and that there is nothing to live for, will you? See what work there is to be done in life, both in our own souls and for others. Surely it matters little whether we have more or less of this world's comfort in these short years. When God is training us for the eternal enjoyment of His love. Keep that great end of life before you, and your troubles here will seem only the small hardships of a journey. Now I must go."

Mr. Tryan rose and held out his hand. Janet took it and said, "God has been very good to me in sending you to me. I will trust in Him. I will try and do every thing you tell me."

Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another. Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and glowing tasselled flower. Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in thin vapor, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.

Janet's dark grand face, still fatigued, had become quite calm, and looked up, as she sat, with a humble childlike expression at the thin blond face and slightly sunken grey eyes which now shone with hectic brightness. She might have been taken for an image of

passionate strength, beaten and worn with conflict; and he for an image of the self-renouncing faith which has soothed that conflict into rest. As he looked at the sweet submissive face, he remembered its look of despairing anguish, and his heart was very full as he turned away from her. "Let me only live to see this work confirmed, and then"

It was nearly ten o'clock when Mr. Tryan left, but Janet was bent on sending for her mother; so Mrs. Pettifer, as the readiest plan put on her bonnet and went herself to fetch Mrs. Raynor. The mother had been too long used to expect that every fresh week would be more painful than the last, for Mrs. Pettifer's news to come upon her with the shock of a surprise. Quietly, without any show of distress, she made up a bundle of clothes, and, telling her little maid that she should not return home that night, accompanied Mrs. Pettifer back in silence.

When they entered the parlor, Janet, wearied out, had sunk to sleep in the large chair, which stood with its back to the door. The noise of the opening door disturbed her, and she was looking round wonderingly, when Mrs. Raynor came up to her chair, and said, "It's your mother, Janet."

"Mother, dear mother!" Janet cried, clasping her closely. "I have not been a good tender child to you, but I *will* be—I will not grieve you any more."

The calmness which had withstood a new sorrow was overcome by a new joy, and the mother burst into tears.

CHAPTER. XX.

ON Sunday morning the rain had ceased, and Janet, looking out of the bedroom window, saw, above the house-tops, a shining mass of white cloud rolling under the far-away blue sky. It was going to be a lovely April day. The fresh sky, left clear and calm after the long vexation of wind and rain, mingled its mild influence with Janet's new thoughts and prospects. She felt a buoyant courage that surprised herself, after the cold crushing weight of despondency which had oppressed her the day before: she could think even of her husband's rage without the old overpowering dread. For a delicious hope—the hope of purification and inward peace—had entered into Janet's soul, and made it spring-time there as well as in the outer world.

While her mother was brushing and coiling up her thick black hair—a favorite task, because it seemed to renew the days of her daughter's girlhood—Janet told how she came to send for Mr. Tryan, how she had remembered their meeting at Sally Martin's in the autumn, and had felt an irresistible desire to see him, and tell him her sins and her troubles.

"I see God's goodness now, mother, in ordering it so that we should meet in that way, to overcome my prejudice against him, and make me feel that he was good, and then bringing it back to my mind in the depth of my trouble. You know what foolish things I used to say about him, knowing nothing of him all the while. And yet he was the man who was to give me comfort and help when every thing else failed me. It is wonderful how I feel able to speak to him as I never have done to any one before; and how every word he says to me enters my heart, and has a new meaning for me. I think it must be because he has felt life more deeply than others, and has a deeper faith. I believe every thing he says at once. His words come to me like rain on the parched ground. It has always seemed to me before as if I could see behind people's words, as one sees behind a screen. But in Mr. Tryan it is his very soul that speaks."

"Well, my dear child, I love and bless him for your sake, if he has given you any comfort. I never believed the harm people said of him, though I had no desire to go and hear him, for I am contented with old-fashioned ways. I find more good teaching than I can practise in reading my Bible at home, and hearing Mr. Crewe at church. But your wants are different, my dear, and we are not all led by the same road. That was certainly good advice of Mr. Tryan's you told me of last night—that we should consult some one that may interfere for you with your husband; and I've been turning it over in my mind while I've been lying awake in the night. I think no body will do so well as Mr. Benjamin Landor, for we must have a man that knows the law, and that Robert is rather afraid of. And perhaps he could bring about an agreement for you to live apart. Your husband's bound to maintain you, you know; and, if you liked, we could move away from Millby and live somewhere else."

"O, mother, we must do nothing yet: I must think about it a little longer. I have a different feeling this morning from what I had yesterday. Something seems to tell me that I must go back to Robert sometime—after a little while. I loved him once better than all the world, and I have never had any children to love. There were things in me that were wrong, and I should like to make up for them if I can."

"Well, my dear, I won't persuade you. Think of it a little longer. But something must be done soon."

"How I wish I had my bonnet, and shawl, and black gown here!" said Janet, after a few minutes' silence. "I should like to go to Paddiford church and hear Mr. Tryan. There would be no fear of my meeting Robert, for he never goes out on a Sunday morning."

"I'm afraid it would not do for me to go to the house and fetch your clothes," said Mrs. Raynor.

"O no, no! I must stay quietly here while you two go to church. I will be Mrs. Pettifer's maid, and get the dinner ready for her by the time she comes back. Dear good woman! She was so tender to me when she took me in, in the night, mother, and all the next day, when I couldn't speak a word to her, to thank her."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE servants at Dempster's felt some surprise when the morning, noon, and evening of Saturday had passed, and still their mistress did not reappear.

"It's very odd," said Kitty, the housemaid, as she trimmed her next week's cap, while Betty, the middle-aged cook, looked on with folded arms. "Do you think as Mrs. Raynor was ill and sent for the missis afore we was up?"

"O," said Betty, "if it had been that, she'd ha' been back'ards an' for'ards three or four times afore now; leastways, she'd ha, sent little Ann to let us know."

"There's sunnat up more nor usal between her an' the master, that you may depend on," said Kitty. "I know those clothes as was lyin' i' the drawing-room yesterday, when the company was come, meant sunnat. I shouldn't wonder if that was what they've had a fresh row about. She's p'raps gone away, an's made up her mind not to come back again."

An' i' the right on't too," said Betty. "I'd ha' overrun him long afore now, if it had been me. I wouldn't stan' bein' mauled as she is by no husband, not if he was the biggest lord i' the land. It's poor work bein' a wife at that price: I'd sooner be a cook wi' out perkises, an' hev roast, an' boil, an' fry, an' bake, all to mind at once. She may well do as she does. I know I'm glad enough of a drop o' summat myself when I'm plagued. I feel very low, like, to-night; I think I shall put my beer i' the saucepan an' warm it."

"What a one you are for warmin' your beer, Betty! I couldn't abide it—nasty bitter stuff!"

"It's fine talkin'; if you was a cook you'd know what belongs to bein' a cook. It's none so nice to hev a sinkin' at your stomach, I can tell you. You wouldn't think so much o' fine ribbins i' your cap then."

"Well, well, Betty, don't be grumpy. Liza Thomson, as is at Phipps', said to me last Sunday, 'I wonder you'll stay at Dempster's,' she says, 'such goins on as there is.' But I says, 'There's things to put up wi' in ivery place, an' you may change, an' change, an' not better yourself when all's said an' done.' Lorst! why, Liza told me herself as Mrs. Phipps was as skinny as skinny i' the kitchen, for all they keep so much company; and as for follyers, she's as cross as a turkey-cock if she finds 'em out. There's nothin' of that sort i' the missis. How pretty she come an' spoke to Job last Sunday! There isn't a good-natur'der woman i' the world, that's my belief—an' handsome too. I alys think there's nobody looks half so well as the missis when she's got her 'air done nice. Lorst! I wish I'd got long 'air like her—my 'air's a-comin' off dreadful."

"There'll be fine work to-morrow, I expect," said Betty, "when the master comes home, an' Dawes a-swearin' as he'll niver do a stroke o' work for him again. It'll be good fun if he sets the justice on him for cuttin' him wi' the whip; the master 'll p'raps get his comb cut for once in his life!"

"Why, he was in a temper like a fi-end this morning," said Kitty. "I dare say it was along o' what had happened wi' the missis. We shall have a pretty house wi' him if she doesn't come back—he'll want to be leatherin' us, I shouldn't wonder. He must hev somethin' t' ill-use when he's in a passion."

"I'd tek care he didn't leather me—no, not

if he was my husban' ten time o'er; I'd pour hot drippin' on him sooner. But the missis hesn't a sperrit like me. He'll mek her come back, you'll see; he'll come round her somehow. There's no likelihood of her coming back to-night though; so I should think we might fasten the doors and go to bed when we like."

On Sunday morning, however, Kitty's mind became disturbed by more definite and alarming conjectures about her mistress. While Betty, encouraged by the prospect of unwonted leisure, was sitting down to continue a letter which had long lain unfinished between the leaves of her Bible, Kitty came running into the kitchen and said,

"Lorst! Betty, I'm all of a tremble; you might knock me down wi' a feather. I've just looked into the missis's wardrobe, an' there's both her bonnets. She must ha' gone wi'out her bonnet. An' then I remember as her night-clothes wasn't on the bed yisterday mornin'; I thought she'd put 'em away to be washed; but she hedn't, for I've been lookin'. It's my belief he's murdered her, and shut her up i' that closet as he keeps locked al'ys. He's capible on't."

"Lors-ha'-massy, why you'd better run to Mrs. Raynor's an' see if she's there, arter all. It was p'raps all a lie."

Mrs. Raynor had returned home to give directions to her little maiden, when Kitty, with the elaborate manifestation of alarm which servants delight in, rushed in without knocking, and holding her hands on her heart as if the consequences to that organ were likely to be very serious, said,

"If you please 'm, is the missis here?"

"No, Kitty; why are you come to ask?"

"Because 'm, she's niver been at home since yesterday mornin', since afore we was up; an' we thought somethin' must ha' happened to her."

"No, don't be frightened, Kitty. Your mistress is quite safe; I know where she is. Is your master at home?"

"No 'm; he went out yesterday mornin', an' said he shouldn't be back afore to-night."

"Well, Kitty, there's nothing the matter with your mistress. You needn't say any thing to any one about her being away from home. I shall call presently, and fetch her gown and bonnet. She wants them to put on."

Kitty, perceiving there was a mystery she

was not to inquire into, returned to Orchard Street, really glad to know that her mistress was safe, but disappointed nevertheless at being told that she was not to be frightened. She was soon followed by Mrs. Raynor in quest of the gown and bonnet. The good mother, on learning that Dempster was not at home, had at once thought that she could gratify Janet's wish to go to Paddiford church.

"See, my dear," she said, as she entered Mrs. Pettifer's parlor; "I've brought you your black clothes. Robert's not at home, and is not coming till this evening. I couldn't find your best black gown, but this will do. I wouldn't bring any thing else, you know; but there can't be any objection to my fetching clothes to cover you. You can go to Paddiford church now, if you like; and I will go with you."

"That's a dear mother! Then we'll all three go together. Come and help me to get ready. Good little Mrs. Crewe! It will vex her sadly that I should go to hear Mr. Tryan. But I must kiss her, and make it up with her."

Many eyes were turned on Janet with a look of surprise as she walked up the aisle of Paddiford church. She felt a little tremor at the notice she knew she was exciting, but it was a strong satisfaction to her that she had been able at once to take a step that would let her neighbors know her change of feeling towards Mr. Tryan: she had left herself now no room for proud reluctance or weak hesitation. The walk through the sweet spring air had stimulated all her fresh hopes, all her yearning desires after purity, strength, and peace. She thought she should find a new meaning in the prayers this morning; her full heart, like an overflowing river, wanted those ready-made channels to pour itself into; and then she should hear Mr. Tryan again, and his words would fall on her like precious balm, as they had done last night. There was a liquid brightness in her eyes as they rested on the mere walls, the pews, the weavers and colliers in their Sunday clothes. The commonest things seemed to touch the spring of love within her, just as, when we are suddenly released from an acute absorbing bodily pain, our heart and senses leap out in new freedom; we think even the noise of streets harmonious, and are ready to hug the tradesman who is wrapping up our change.

A door had been opened in Janet's cold dark prison of self-despair, and the golden light of morning was pouring in its slanting beams through the blessed opening. There was sunlight in the world; there was a divine love caring for her; it had given her an earnest of good things; it had been preparing comfort for her in the very moment when she had thought herself most forsaken.

Mr. Tryan might well rejoice when his eye rested on her as he entered his desk; but he rejoiced with trembling. He could not look at the sweet hopeful face without remembering its yesterday's look of agony; and there was the possibility that that look might return.

Janet's appearance at church was greeted not only by wondering eyes, but by kind hearts, and after the service several of Mr. Tryan's hearers with whom she had been on cold terms of late, contrived to come up to her and take her by the hand.

"Mother," said Miss Linnet, "do let us go and speak to Mrs. Dempster. I'm sure there's a great change in her mind towards Mr. Tryan. I noticed how eagerly she listened to the sermon, and she's come with Mrs. Pettifer, you see. We ought to go and give her a welcome among us.

"Why, my dear, we've never spoke friendly these five year. You know she's been as haughty as any thing since I quarrelled with her husband. However, let bygones be bygones: I've no grudge agin' the poor thing, more particular as she must ha' flew in her husband's face to come an' hear Mr. Tryan. Yis, let us go an' speak to her."

The friendly words and looks touched Janet a little too keenly, and Mrs. Pettifer wisely hurried her home by the least frequented road. When they reached home, a violent fit of weeping, followed by continual lassitude, showed that the emotions of the morning had overstrained her nerves. She was suffering, too, from the absence of the long-accustomed stimulus which she had promised Mr. Tryan not to touch again. The poor thing was conscious of this, and dreaded her own weakness, as the victim of intermittent insanity dreads the on-coming of the old illusion.

"Mother," she whispered, when Mrs. Raynor urged her to lie down and rest all the afternoon, that she might be the better

prepared to see Mr. Tryan in the evening—"mother don't let me have any thing if I ask for it."

In the mother's mind there was the same anxiety, and in her it was mingled with another fear—the fear lest Janet, in her present excited state of mind, should take some premature step in relation to her husband, which might lead back to all the former troubles. The hint she had thrown out in the morning of her wish to return to him after a time, showed a new eagerness for difficult duties, that only made the long-saddened, sober mother tremble.

But as evening approached Janet's morning heroism all forsook her: her imagination influenced by physical depression as well as by mental habits, was haunted by the vision of her husband's return home, and she began to shudder with the yesterday's dread. She heard him calling her, she saw him going to her mother's to look for her, she felt sure he would find her out, and burst in upon her.

"Pray, pray, don't leave me, don't go to

church," she said to Mrs. Pettifer. "You and mother both stay with me till Mr. Tryan comes."

At twenty minutes past six the church bells were ringing for the evening service, and soon the congregation were streaming along Orchard Street in the mellow sunset. The street opened toward the west. The red, half-sunken sun shed a solemn splendor on the every day houses, and crimsoned the windows of Dempster's projecting upper story.

Suddenly a loud murmur arose and spread along the stream of church-goers, and one group after another paused and looked backward. At the far end of the street, men, accompanied by a miscellaneous group of on-lookers, are slowly carrying something—a body stretched on a door. Slowly they pass along the middle of the street, lined all the way with awe-struck faces, till they turn aside and pause in the red sunlight before Dempster's door.

It is Dempster's body. No one knows whether he is alive or dead.

CAUTION AS TO LOFTY BUILDINGS.—Towers, spires, and obelisks of extravagantly great height are occasionally erected in England, with apparently an entire forgetfulness of the danger to which they are subjected by earthquakes. Tremors of the surface are happily rare with us, insomuch that one or two generations sometimes pass without the experience of any such phenomena; but it should be kept in mind that they have occurred, of such severity as to endanger lofty buildings, and therefore may occur again. I sometimes feel inclined to ask if it was wise to build the Victoria Tower of the new palace at Westminster to so great an elevation as three hundred feet, with a great archway passing through the base, for no longer ago than February 1750, there was a shock so much felt at that spot as to make the counselors in the court of King's Bench, in Westminster Hall, believe that the building over their heads was about to fall. The shake of November 1755, moreover, agitated many lakes in our island; and that of August 1816 twisted a steeple at Inverness, which long remained a striking monument of a power in nature which in our country we are but too apt to overlook and slight.—*Correspondent of Chambers' Journal.*

"MARY BROWNS at Pompeii, in Italy," is the unpretending title of an exceedingly interesting little book, just published by Kiggins & Kellogg, of this city. During a week's visit to Naples and its neighborhood, the writer man-

aged to see more objects of interest than many less observant persons would have seen in as many months, or perhaps years, and she conveys her useful information to her less fortunate friends in a very pleasant manner. It is one of the most attractive little books for young people that has been recently published in this city.—*Journal of Commerce.*

We desire to add our commendation to that of the *Journal of Commerce*. This book will be interesting to old readers as well as to the young.

It gives a very lively picture of the present state of Herculaneum and Pompeii.—*Living Age.*

PAY OF MINISTERS OF THE CROWN.—An article in the last number of the *Journal of the Statistical Society* treats of this subject in a way that will be new to many. The principal ministers of state should enjoy incomes equal to that of the highest class of professional men. A successful barrister, for instance, makes a large income by the time he arrives at middle life; the bench is then ready to receive the judge; and when the powers of the judge fail, he may retire on a pension of £3500 or £5000 a year. A cabinet minister, on the other hand—with the exception of the Lord Chancellor—has a most precarious income of from £2000 to £5000 a year, during his uncertain tenure of office, and then retires upon a pension ranging from £1000 to £2000 a year.—*Chambers' Journal.*

From The Economist 19 Sept.

THE MIND OF THE MUTINY AND ITS PRESENT ATTITUDE.

THE assured confidence with which all Englishmen look to the *result* of our present Indian calamities only renders the suspense more painful and exciting in which we await the first fruits of our remedial measures. In the meantime we scan with intense eagerness every new feature of this strange and terrible revolt, to see if we can decipher the sudden meaning it bears, and reach the real state of intellect and feeling in the native army of Bengal from which it has proceeded. The chequered news of the last mail throws many gleams of light upon the state of mind of the mutineers. We will briefly recount it, and draw attention to the features which strike us as giving the most vivid insight into the character with which we have to deal. The worst, though scarcely the most instructive and remarkable details of the present mail are from the Lower Ganges, from the neighborhood of Dinapore, and the province of Behar. The last date here is the 10th of August. The Supreme Government of Calcutta had at last wisely adopted the measure of disarming the Governor-General's body guard. As the Chinese troops (accompanied we hear, by Lord Elgin himself) were arriving in the Ganges, it was, we suppose, no longer in any way needful to trust any section of the untrustworthy Bengal army. And as the wavering fire of insurrection, after appearing for a time half-subdued in the neighborhood of the Presidency, was beginning to break out again, it was a measure of common precaution to cut off the danger of contagion in the capital. Whatever may be thought of Lord Canning's prudence in so long trusting his guard, no one can dispute the presence of mind and gallantry he has shown, and it is a relief to feel he is now under the protection of European troops alone. The fresh disturbances in the Presidency and its neighborhood are a very characteristic feature of this great revolt. The original excitement first began in Calcutta. It was allayed and suppressed by the energy of the Government. Then it just smouldered, overawed by the influence of European energy, and the terror of European arms. Some regiments of native troops were even conspicuously faithful. The Mahometan city of Patna had been kept in check by the fidelity of the 7th, 8th, and

40th regiments of Bengal Native Infantry. It appears that at last the intoxicating excitement of so general and long-continued an insurrection overcame their habitual reverence for their English masters, and rendered them unable to keep steady in their duty. On the 23rd July, they mutinied with the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Dinapore (at the junction of the Gogra and the Ganges), and were driven out with much loss by Her Majesty's 10th Foot. Till the eleventh hour they were faithful, then being able to resist the stream of excitement no longer, they abandoned themselves to its current. They were not alone in this singular and Oriental line of conduct. The 14th Bengal Infantry resisted the order to disarm at Jhelum, and has been cut to pieces by a detachment of Europeans. All up the course of the Lower Ganges, the smouldering excitement breaks out in wavering irregular flames. A plot to murder the Europeans at Jessore and Benares had been discovered at Midnapore in the Presidency, and foiled. Moorshedabad and Patna, both Mahometan cities, are anxiously watched as the Mahometan festival of the Mohurram approaches. Fortunately, our rapidly arriving troops must have restored tranquility here before this time: but in the meantime the mutiny at Dinapore had unfortunately disturbed the rear of General Havelock's victorious force, and rendered it much less likely that he could receive immediate reinforcements. Benares was in danger from the mutineers. A detachment of our 10th Foot had been foiled in a night attack on Arrah, near Dinapore, where the mutineers had taken refuge, and lost 200 men, two-thirds of their number. Martial law was proclaimed in Behar, and, we are happy to say, Sir James Outram appointed to the command there. Great fears must be entertained for the large indigo and opium manufactories of that province—the "Garden of India," as it is called; for if the mutineers spread over it, the loss of property will be enormous. The main feature of these fresh disturbances, as concerns the character of the mutiny, is the flickering resolve, the long-wavering mind of the mutineers, who, nevertheless, when once in revolt, show that they abandon themselves utterly and frantically to the cruel *motives*, without any evidence of the *heat*, of passion. We see here the features of the mutiny in its *first* stage: as we advance up the river we shall see it in its more

terrible developments, when all attempt at self-government or obedience is drowned in the tumultuous rush of the old Hindoo craft and ferocity to the surface of their life. We must not forget that there is not an Anglo-Indian now in this country who has not till now regarded these Bengal Sepoys as a mild and almost refined class of men,—in short, as “nature’s gentlemen.” Yet the grain of the real character, subdued, not by voluntary self-discipline, but by involuntary respect for English rule, comes out broadly and strongly so soon as the shadow of that rule is removed. Like a long-bent spring suffered to recoil, it springs with accumulated violence against the hand that has so long kept it under. Involuntary awe and submission are ever transient in their influence, and liable to strong reaction. Only free and voluntary self-discipline goes to the very roots of character—and this course we could not give to the Hindoo.

Let us pass on to the next stage of the great disaster, which we see in Oude and the North-West. Thence our accounts are almost completely cheering, if anything can be called cheering in any way associated with tragedy so horrible and black. Under General Havelock, the 78th Highlanders have renewed the glory they won at Assaye when commanded by a still greater general. Between the 8th and the 30th of July, with at most 1,300 men, this intrepid commander, ably aided by General Neill with his few Madras Fusileers, has marched a direct distance of considerably more than 150 miles, three times defeated overwhelming forces of the mutineers, 13,000 in number, and re-occupied Cawnpore, too late to prevent the horrors of the recent massacre; he had left that city to march on Bithoor, which he found abandoned, had a fourth time defeated a powerful body of the enemy, and was in full march on Lucknow when cholera broke out amongst his men, and compelled a retreat to Cawnpore to leave the sick and to await reinforcements. We do not greatly fear that this delay will endanger Lucknow. A Ghoorka force was expected to relieve the city; and within a very few days reinforcement, in spite of the Dinapore mutinies, would, probably reach General Havelock from the Presidency, and enable him to proceed. It was on or about the 30th of July, apparently, that he was obliged to return to Cawnpore. All his movements

show that a trifling reinforcement, sufficient only to replace the victims of disease in his small force, would enable this resolute commander to relieve Lucknow, which is within 50 miles of Cawnpore. And we cannot doubt that forces sufficient for this purpose were even then on their route up the river, and available for this purpose, unless the disturbances in Bahar should have detained them.

The insight given into the character of the mutineers by the fuller news from this portion of the revolted districts is painful enough. We see the great predominance of ferocious motives over ferocious instincts which make so striking a contrast between the Oriental and the European. English soldiers have shown themselves ferocious and passionate and licentious enough, when they have had their unbridled way, as in the storming of many a town. But theirs is the ferocity of a savage beast. The Sepoy seems to give a complete loose to his ferocious wishes without being impelled to passionate or fiery action. Their caution and calmness remain. Nena Sahib gives food for two days to the garrison of Cawnpore; he offers them boats for their escape; in the meantime he is erecting masked batteries on the shore for the express purpose of destroying the fugitives comfortably without risk of a last conflict, as soon as they are embarked on the Ganges. He sends boatmen of his own with them; at a given signal the boatmen jump out and swim to the shore, and the masked batteries open on the defenceless English. What cool and rational cruelty is this! It is not brutality,—it is not the action of the Bengal tiger: it is an intellectualized and timid tiger with tiger-motive and human plan. The cruelty to the ladies, too, seems to have been of the same horrible kind; not lust, but an intellectual desire to revenge the sense of a race’s long subordination. What a fearful and vivid picture those words call up in which one of the victorious force describe the room that was the scene of the massacre:—“Long tresses of hair—dresses covered with blood—here and there a work-box or a bonnet.” These traces of everyday domestic life give a terrible pathos to the tragic reality.

Passing on to the news from Delhi, we have again to record accounts on the whole cheering. At Agra there had been success. The Kotah contingent and other rebels had

been entirely dispersed. Brigadier-General Nicholson, after completely and finally routing the Sealkote mutineers was marching to relieve the force before Delhi. General Reid, incapacitated by illness, had given place to Brigadier Wilson in command of the besieging army—a man, we understand, in every way equal to his task,—cool, keen, and courageous. Reinforcements from the Punjab,—thanks to Major Edwardes' wisdom and influence—were pouring in. The sallies of the mutineers had been uniformly repelled with heavy loss. We have a glimpse too of life within the walls of Delhi, which is very graphic and impressive. The Sepoys plundered and oppressed the city. The Sepoys who had appropriated the first booty were constantly quarrelling with the poorer Sepoys who had joined them since. The former did not like to fight lest they should lose their wealth; and were bitterly reproached on this account by the latter. The puppet King had little power. The Princes had none; but while professedly in command of the troops, were ridiculed by the Sepoys for their cowardice and ignorance of military rules. But the strangest glimpse of the Asiatic temperament of the mutineers is contained in the words: "The King send *sweetmeats for the forces on the field*, and the guard at the door of the city plunder it like the property of an enemy." Nothing could throw a more striking light on the childish pleasure-loving, lawless nature of men who are fighting in a hopeless conflict for so fearful a stake. It reads like a passage in the Arabian Nights.

From Bombay the news is less remarkable and perhaps more gloomy. A single regiment, the 27th Native Infantry, has mutinied at Kolapore. Something of the kind was anticipated in England. By the last mail it had been heard that the curious "cake" (dopatta) mystery had appeared there. Our readers know that before the revolt at Meerut mysterious cakes had been widely distributed in many villages of the neighboring districts, which had attracted the attention of Europeans, without however leading to any explanation. The difficulty felt was that the cakes were chiefly distributed where *no* mutiny eventually broke out. Still the thing was noted, and when the same phenomenon happened in the Presidency of Bombay, anticipations were formed of some spread of the revolt. The worst feature in the Kolapore

mutiny is that it is an outbreak at an *entirely new* point. Kolapore is far South of Poonah, and not in any proximity to the districts hitherto disturbed. The irritating cause appears to have been, as usual, Mahometan. Fortunately, European forces were arriving from the Mauritius. The immortal 33rd and a company of the Royal Artillery had arrived in Bombay, and they would bring with them, we trust, the fortune of their former great commander. Some alarm in neighboring districts had been felt, but seemed to subside with the presence of a strong European force. Lord Elphinstone's presence of mind and large sagacity was more than equal to the emergency. Mahometan plotters, whose letters were fortunately intercepted, had been arrested. And confidence was completely restored in Bombay.

The dopatta, or cake mystery, to which we have referred above, represents most strikingly the utter ignorance of native thoughts and purposes in which the Europeans may live in the midst of their Indian subjects. From first to last we have obtained scarcely any information from native sources as to their aims, motives, or plans. Yet the *character* of the mutiny is not so obscure. Hesitating, guided at first by calculations of result, afterwards by the mere infection of restless excitement, the ambition of regiment after regiment has been fanned into flame. This course once taken, they have felt all return hopeless; and yet the same timid and cautious conduct has been combined with the most unbridled license given to *motives* of revenge; the old childishness and love of pleasure remains amidst the thirst for gain and blood; their cruelty is cold, and their panics alone are passionate; but over all these lies the impenetrable reserve of an alien race. We can never seemingly count upon their *practical* course, so much does it wind about with the windings of excitement and fear; but the true grain of their nature in every course of conduct we probably understand even better than they understand it themselves.

From The Economist Sept. 19.

WHAT IS CERTAIN AND WHAT IS DOUBTFUL IN INDIAN AFFAIRS.

A CONSIDERABLE time must elapse before we shall be in a position to assign with confidence, or to enumerate with any approach to completeness, all the causes which have combined to produce the Indian outbreak, and to

give to it its peculiar features of treachery and atrocity.* That these causes have been many and various it is impossible to doubt:—several of them may be still undiscovered; in our actual state of ignorance we may assign too much influence to some and too little influence to others;—and peace must have been long restored and passions must have been quenched in the satiety of vengeance, or must have had time to subside by natural exhaustion, before knowledge will bear fruit in wisdom, and a thorough insight into past misconduct or mistakes shall enable us to inaugurate a sounder and more successful policy for the future. But there are a few points which are already clear to our own minds, and which two or three statements and suggestions will, we think, enable us to make clear to our readers also.

In the first place, then, this is neither the revolt of a people nor the mutiny of an army against personal wrongs or intolerable oppressions. Towards both we may have acted incautiously and injudiciously; towards both we may have come short of the full measure of our duty; towards both we may have sins of omission to repair; in the eyes of both we may have the ineradicable vices of a foreign origin, a forcible conquest, and an incomprehensible and repulsive faith. But this is the full extent to which the most self-accusing candor will allow us to go without transgressing notorious and undisputed truth. To the *people*—by which term we mean the masses of peasants, traders, and civilians,—all in fact except the nobles, the princes, and the soldiers—we have uniformly and universally for a long series of years acted with a justice and a consideration to which they had hitherto been strangers. It is possible, indeed, that the very systematic and penetrating regularity of our rule may in some quarters have been felt as a grievance. It is possible that some may be senseless enough to prefer the chances of ruinous extortion to the certainty of moderate but unescapable taxation. It is even probable that in districts which have been long under our steady but equitable administration, the horrors of the past from which we rescued the cultivators of the soil may be forgotten, and the felt pressure of the Present, mild and impartial as in comparison it is, may be alone remembered. But though our rule may not be to the Hindoos the blessing which it might have been, there can be

no doubt that is a blessing. And though its superiority to the systems which preceded it may not be felt and recognized as widely or as keenly as could be wished, there can be no question that it is felt and recognized by all the industrious and well-disposed throughout the length and breadth of British India. Property is secure; rights are respected, life is protected, justice is done, to a degree which never was approached under any native Prince or foreign Conqueror before. Again: The army—the revolting soldiery that is—had literally not the shadow of a grievance to allege against us. Their pay was liberal; their pensions ample and secure; their discipline mild even to laxity; the toils and efforts exacted from them moderate in the extreme. Their prejudices were respected to the very verge—and sometimes even beyond the verge—of prudence, and often at great inconvenience to ourselves, and at considerable mischief to the service. Their follies and childish discontents were borne with, humored, and soothed away; and, what was worse, their derelictions of duty and indications of mutinous temper were passed over and hushed up, to an extent of which we are now reaping the lamentable but natural fruits. The Sepoys found us so indulgent, that they concluded we must be either *soft* or *timid*. They found us so enduring and so forgiving, that they fancied we should endure and forgive any thing. Neither the people nor the army, then, had any practical grievance to revolt against, or any individual or national wrongs to avenge. None have been alleged, and the incidents of the rebellion point to none.

It was otherwise with the Native Princes and nobility—with the Mahometan rulers and the Hindoo gentry—with the ministers and political intriguers throughout Hindostan. The Mahometan conquerors we had superseded—the native Sovereigns we had reduced to insignificance or had absorbed—the Hindoo nobles and wealthy patricians who as ministers and warriors used to lead armies and govern States, to wield power and to gorge themselves with plunder—all these we had shorn of their grandeur and deprived of their career. The Indian gentlemen of rank and station who used to command regiments in our service, or in that of our enemies or our allies, found their occupation gone. We no longer allowed them to rise to high com-

mand in our own armies; our enemies were all conquered, and our allies had in many instances the troops they still retained officered by Englishmen. Every fresh State we conquered or annexed added inevitably to our secret enemies by a double process:—the superseded Princes, and all who had found pride, or profit, or ambition, in serving them, found a common interest in hating us. A plot on the part of all the great and all the mischievous to extirpate the British intruders who had reduced them to insignificance and harmlessness, and under whose strong and rigid administration their misrule could not exist or raise its head,—was, therefore, one of the most natural and intrinsically probable events;—and the rebellion and mutiny we have witnessed, which was *not* an effort to avenge wrongs or to throw off oppression, *was*, beyond question, a *political conspiracy* engendered by princely ambition and ministerial intrigue, baffled and discontented, and seeking to recover a position and an arena for activity.

Nor is the correctness of this view of the case at all impugned, as some seem to imagine, by the fact that Hindoos and Mahometans are alike implicated in the plot, and appear to have acted from the first in unison. It is true that these races are mutually hostile and repellent. They stood originally in the relations of victors and vanquished—relations which are rarely amicable. Their religious creeds and affections are diametrically opposed. But they have long since been fused into an unnatural alliance by community of defeat and community of disappointment. The Mahometans hate Christianity even more than they despise Brahminism; and the Hindoos entertain greater dread of Christianity, the mild religion of their present masters, than of Islamism, whose fierce methods of conversion they have probably forgotten. It is natural enough, therefore, that both should combine against a common conqueror and a common master. In all rebellions and conspiracies, there are two parties,—the planners and the instruments, the agents and their tools, the deceivers and their dupes, the fools who do the work and the knaves who profit by the spoil. In the present instance every thing points to the conclusion that a deliberate and widely spread plot has been laid by Mahometan Princes and Ministers, aided by Hindoo politicians eminent by position or

ability, for the entire, sudden, and simultaneous overthrow of the British dominion and the extirpation or expulsion of all Europeans from the land. That the Bengal Army, consisting mainly of Hindoos, should have so readily fallen in the trap and have made themselves the tools of their wily employers and former oppressors, will seem less strange if we consider for a moment how these men have been treated by us and what are the special and inherent features of their character. In the first place, we have, especially of late, treated them with an indulgence and a leniency certain to be misinterpreted and abused by Orientals, whose peculiarity it is never to appreciate generosity or mildness and always to regard forbearance as a sign of conscious timidity or weakness. The consistent behavior of their native sovereigns and masters from immemorial time has engraven this mode of reasoning indelibly upon their minds. So that while we fancied we were persuading them to love us, we were in fact only unteaching them to fear us. Before the mutiny broke out, the control of a wholesome terror had been deplorably weakened or withdrawn.

Then, the mass of Hindoos, with all their artificial and perverse civilization, have at bottom many of the characteristics of children and of savages. They are ignorant; they are superstitious; they are excitable. Theirs is

“The blind capricious rage

A word can kindle and a word assuage.”

Their passions are readily aroused by oratory or by taunts. They are easily persuaded of the most monstrous absurdities. From many corroborative statements which have come to our knowledge, both through public and private channels, there can, we think, remain no doubt that the Hindoos in the army *were* persuaded by the crafty intriguers who were sent among them, that we had a deliberate design against their religion. But considerable misapprehension has existed here as to the precise nature of their fear and of the design they thus attributed to us. It was not *conversion* in the English sense of the word that they dreaded. It was not the persuasion or the reasoning of our missionaries. The language used by themselves explains exactly what they meant—as far as they allowed themselves time to explain it to their own minds. The prisoners who have been questioned as to the causes of their mutiny

concur in declaring that they were told "the Government was going to *take away their religion*." They had, as a rule, they said, no complaint against the officers whom they assailed, except that they had concealed and favored this black and incomprehensible design. They had a marvellous impression of our mysterious power. The electric telegraph and the railways had done much to deepen and perplex this impression. They saw that whatever we resolved to do, that we succeeded in accomplishing, and often by means incomprehensible to them. And they fancied we were going to "take away their religion" by some magic of which they were to be the helpless victims. They imagined we could "take away" their religion by some process similar to that by which we "take away" their property; and that by some *legerdemain* on our part *with which their will or consent would have nothing to do*, they would wake some morning and find themselves Christians. The cartridges, about which so much misapprehension existed and so many lies have been told, they were persuaded were one of the means to be employed for producing this result—a result which they seem to have considered as rather material than moral in its nature. That they could be led to entertain this strange belief serves to show the sort of childish minds we have to deal with.

Other points of certainty and doubt we must reserve for future exposition.

From The Economist, 26 Sept.

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THE PICTURE.

NOTHING, it is true, can be graver than the crisis in India and nothing more "horrible and heart-rending" than the details of many of the catastrophes which have desolated and disgraced that country. A few thousand Europeans scattered among a hundred and fifty millions of Asiatics, have been suddenly called upon to fight for existence and for empire; and they have had to defend their conquests against the very men through whose instrumentality they had won them. A man's foes have been those of his own household: in the dead of night we have been treacherously assailed, in the crisis of battle we have been basely deserted, by the very servants who had eaten our salt, by the very soldiers whom we had led to victory. And we, a people in the foremost ranks of European

civilization, accustomed to all the luxuries and refinements and gentle manners and courteous amenities of the most polished and facile existence, have, in the persons of our sons and daughters, our brethren and sisters, been compelled to endure brutalities and tortures at the very thought of which the brain almost gives way—atrocities such as no European ferocity, even when inspired and sharpened by a persecuting superstition, ever yet dreamed of inflicting on its victims.

Yet amid all these horrors and these dangers—of which every fresh mail that arrives from the East brings renewed and aggravated tidings—we may discern some gleams of comfort and many hints of warning and instruction, which it would be negligent and foolish not to collect and treasure up,—some rays of light where so much is dark,—some certainties where so much is doubtful. And the first thing which we notice, and from which we draw hope and consolation, is this:—while every day brings us fresh proof of the extensive character of the rebellion, of the universality of its prevalence through the Bengal army, and of the elaborate and well-planned conspiracy of which it is the result and outward expression, every day also makes more and more clear and certain the fact that *it has no single or capable head*;—no warrior, or Prince, or Statesman has appeared, to combine all the scattered movements into one, to concentrate all the isolated successes of the insurgents towards one great victory, and to direct upon one point and to one end the énergies which are now barren and profitless from their disjointed character. The Emperor of Delhi or the King of Oude may be the nominal centre of the plot, but these, as we know, are only powerless puppets; no leader, civil or military, has stood forth; no name even has been mentioned as the supposed chief of the insurgents. They do not appear to have any plan; they do not appear to obey any general; each man fights and plunders for his own profit and according to his own good pleasure;—they conspired to mutiny and murder—there is no indication that they can conspire to conquer. In great national convulsions, even where the original outbreak proceeds from no single inspiring or commanding mind, it generally happens that some such natural chief is elicited by the occasion, or created by the emergency. But there is not the slightest appearance of this

now; and without this, the revolt may be terrible, but can never become formidable. The absence of this is of itself enough to quiet all uneasiness as to the safety of our Empire.

Again: the crisis through which we are passing, fearful as it is, is probably no more than was necessary to arouse us from our apathy. The phlegmatic temper of the English nation requires shocks like these. Our normal habit is to acquiesce in whatever we find existing—to fancy that the actual is the natural and the necessary—to pursue the old system, however injudicious—to disregard all symptoms, however menacing—to turn a deaf ear to all exhortations of radical change, however influential be the voice that utters them. We are essentially *routinier* in our nature. When faults and flaws are so clearly pointed out and so indisputably proved that we cannot gainsay them, when abuses grow into grievances, and when danger becomes so obvious and so instant that stupidity itself can no longer ignore it, we introduce some partial amendment, we contrive some added security, we endeavor to perfect or modify a bad system instead of replacing it by a good one. Nothing short of some terrible catastrophe has power to startle and energize us into searching investigations and thorough reforms. It needed a Crimean winter to convince us of the defects in our military administration, and a universal mutiny with its accompanying horrors to open our eyes to those flagrant errors in the constitution and discipline of the Bengal army which so many able and experienced men had for years warned us of in vain. It is sad that our lethargic slumbers can only be broken at such a fearful cost, but so it is. If the Sepoy regiments had merely mutinied, shot a few officers and compelled the rest to fly, we greatly doubt whether English Statesmen would have been roused enough to go to the bottom of the question, or whether the English nation would have been interested enough to uphold them in the necessary measures. In all likelihood, in such a case Ministers would have been content with palliatives and anodynes, and beyond all doubt a large portion of the people and the Press would have hampered and opposed them with all sorts of crude notions and inapplicable theories, and would have done—what now only one man and one newspaper have stained themselves by doing—viz., have sought to turn the

calamity to the base ends of Party. But when our very Empire in the East has for a moment been shaken to its foundation, when our countrymen and personal friends have been massacred and tortured, and tender and delicate women whom we knew and loved have been slain under circumstances of atrocity and brutal cruelty which the pen refuses to describe, then at length we are aroused to an adequate conception of the painful magnitude of the catastrophe, and of the vastness and difficulty of the problem with which we have to deal. For once our intellect has become so vividly excited that ignorance and misrepresentation will have no power to blind or to mislead, and inveterate prejudice and interested falsehood will be swept away like cobwebs; while at the same time our passions are strung up to such a degree of resolute and steady tension that no difficulties, natural or artificial, will be suffered for one moment to stand in the way of our doing whatever is decided upon as fitting to be done.

Moreover the *extent* of the catastrophe has made our path clear and our task comparatively easy. Our Statesmen in India have—what so rarely falls to the lot of Statesmen—*carte blanche*—an unencumbered field. The Bengal army is gone—passed away into history, with all its defects, all its obligations, all its claims. It might have been very difficult to reform it—it will be comparatively easy to re-construct it. The moment the principle on which its re-creation is to proceed has been determined on;—the moment we have satisfied ourselves as to those errors in its former constitution which rendered possible its late crimes and dissolution,—we are free to act as on the first day of our Imperial existence; there are no ruins to interfere with the new edifice we choose to build, no embarrassing legacies of the past to hamper or control our action. If we are not successful now—if we do not create a new army, perfect at all points, adequate to our necessities and specially adapted to our circumstances—we can plead no want of means, or experience, or golden opportunity, in extenuation of our failure. Never did rulers set to work with more unfettered hands.

There is yet another “jewel” of inestimable price to be found in this “venomous and ugly” visitation, if we have but the wisdom to extract it. It will surely compel us—we

shall be very senseless and very guilty if it do not compel us—to study thoroughly and to determine distinctly and deliberately the principles on which our entire government of Hindostan shall in future be conducted, so that all our measures shall be consistent with each other and convergent to one point, and so that for once and in one quarter of the world, British policy shall be systematic, uniform, and persistent. We can no longer without wilful folly act a little on one plan and a little on another; hesitate between two opposing theories, and end by borrowing something from both, or trying timidly and inefficiently each in turn; allow one Governor-General to upset or neutralize the proceedings of a predecessor, his antipodes in opinion and temperament; in a word, leave one of the grandest Empires ever entrusted to a nation at the mercy of that feeble vacillation which is the invariable result of *half-knowledge* and *half-convictions*. The most grave and anxious questions are before us, and we can neither evade them, nor cushion them, nor nibble at them, nor put them aside till “a more convenient season.” We must now decide—and decide after searching inquiry and patient thought—decide upon that thorough comprehension of the matter which allows of no retraced conclusions or repented steps—whether in future India is to be governed as a *Colony* or as a *Conquest*; whether native agency is to be welcomed or to be excluded; whether we are to rule our Asiatic subjects with strict and generous justice, wisely and beneficently, as their natural and indefeasible superiors, by virtue of our higher civilization, our purer religion, our sterner energies, our subtler intellect, our more creative faculties, our more commanding and indomitable will;—or whether—as some doctrinaires preached till recently, and will preach again (we hear little of their theory now)—whether we are to regard the Hindoos and Mahometans as our equal fellow-citizens, fit to be entrusted with the functions of self-government, ripe (or to be ripened) for British institutions, likely to appreciate the blessings of our rule, and, therefore, to aid us in perpetuating it,—and, in a word, to be gradually prepared, as our own working classes are preparing, for a full participation in the privileges of representative assemblies, trial by jury, and all the other palladia of English liberty. We have

to decide, moreover, what is probably the most difficult problem ever submitted to Statesmen for practical solution—viz., how to secure to the Government of India that immunity from the direct influence of Parliamentary votes and Party contests, without which our noble Empire would be jeopardized every hour,—and yet to retain to Parliament that *substantial* control in ultimate resort which we may be sure the English People will never consent to surrender.

From The Saturday Review, 26. Sept.

WITHIN DELHI.

INTENSELY interesting as are the accounts of the doings of our countrymen in the East, and eagerly as we peruse the records of their heroic conduct with which the daily Journals are now filled, we should, nevertheless, read with avidity a bundle of Sepoy letters written from within Delhi, or from the “Camp before Lucknow.” In the present posture of affairs, such a correspondence would be most important and useful; for the mutiny has just reached that point at which as much is to be expected from the progress of internal decay, as from our own culminating efforts to suppress it. “Time, the Avenger” is our steady friend and cogent ally. To us, time will give health, and strength, and power; but to the enemy it can be productive of nothing but weakness, disease, and dissolution. There is no element of enduring vitality in such a movement as the Sepoys have begun; and the fiercer its spasms, and the more violent its convulsions, the sooner must it exhaust itself. Then comes the reaction and that prostration from which there can be no second birth of energy and power. Once exhausted, there is no foreign source from which the Sepoys can recruit themselves; whilst to us the “something beyond” is of almost incalculable magnitude and strength.

This is no mere theory. Already we have some glimpses of the state of affairs within Delhi. A letter from a native, residing there, has been translated and published in all our Journals. Bearing on every sentence the impress of truth, it gives a lively picture of the state of the imperial city, and of the condition of the rebel army. It speaks of the terrible oppression exercised by the Sepoys upon the peaceful inhabitants. “They plundered,” says the writer, “every rich house

and shop in the city. They took every horse they found in the stables of the citizens. They killed a number of poor shopkeepers for asking the proper prices of their things." Everywhere, indeed, the rebellious Sepoys have been the dire enemies of the people. A scourge to mankind, wherever the spirit of mutiny has asserted itself, these lawless men have done such foul wrong to their own countrymen, that there is an intense desire in all the disturbed districts for the re-establishment of order and peace. When the day of our triumph arrives, we shall be hailed as deliverers by thousands upon thousands of the suffering population. Nay, we have already appeared in that character. Our readers will have observed, in the admirable letter descriptive of the movements of Havelock's little army which we published in our last number, the emphatic statement that the arrival of the British force and the re-establishment of our supremacy at Cawnpore had been hailed with delight and enthusiasm by a people harassed and oppressed by Nana Sahib and the wretches under his control.

Nor is it only that the Sepoys are making war against their countrymen. Already are they beginning to make war on one another. "The poor regiments," says the native writer quoted above, "are very jealous of those who are rich; as the rich Sepoys don't wish to go to fight, or to the field of battle simply, they are very often insulted by their poor friends. I am of opinion their private feelings will compel them to fight with each other, some day or other, as many times during my stay at Delhi I heard there was very likely to be a quarrel between the rich and poor regiments." Firing, indeed, had been heard in the streets of the city, and there was no doubt that disunion was rapidly spreading among the mutineers. Meanwhile, they were finding that they had another enemy to contend with within the walls of Delhi. The Goojurs, who had aided them as poor men, are turning against them now that they are rich. Plunderers themselves, the Sepoys are becoming objects of plunder. The rabble of Delhi appear to track the Sepoys, when they go out to fight, eager as wolves or vultures for the prey; and if there are not dead bodies enough to spoil, they supply more for the hand of the spoiler.

The native writer states that, on the night of the 30th of June, many Sepoys "disap-

peared forever; they (others) were plundered and beaten by Goojurs, and did not bring a farthing back with them." These Goojurs had joined in the massacre of our people, and in the pillage of our property; and they are now, with laudable impartiality, as well disposed to rob their own countrymen as to plunder the Feringhees. And so the internecine strife is kept alive in Delhi. The Sepoys plunder the bankers and shopkeepers, and the Goojurs plunder the Sepoys. Every man's hand is against his neighbor, and our battle is fighting itself. Even the sweetmeats (the "favorite mehtos") which the King sends out to the Sepoys, are stolen at the palace gate. "The guard at the door of the city" (the city gate of the palace), says the native writer, "plunder it like the property of an enemy."

"Every man for himself" is, with the whole body of the Sepoys, the sole principle of action. There is nothing like a common cause. They do not rally round the throne of Delhi. They have no love for the King, no respect for the Princes. "The old King," says the native writer, "is very seldom obeyed; the Princes never." The Sepoys fight for themselves, and plunder for themselves. The cement of a great national object is entirely wanting. "The Sepoys," we are told, "plundered every treasury in the city, and put the money in their own pockets; they did not give a farthing out of this to the King." The Mogul himself would fain be divested of the greatness which has been thrust upon him; and the least warlike of men, the Shah-zadahs, who in a luckless hour have been called upon to command the rebel forces, are said to be in a state of deplorable terror—"their hearts palpitate from the firings of muskets and guns." If the mutineers can get hold of an European deserter, or of a wretched prisoner who has not the courage to die like a hero rather than serve against his country, they promote him to high office, make him a Brigadier of Artillery, and send him to direct the fire of their guns. It is evident that there is no master-spirit among them—no one who can keep together the discordant elements of the rebel army, and elevate the Sepoy mutiny, at its head-quarters, into a great national movement.

It need not be said that this state of things must necessarily grow worse and worse, until Delhi becomes a very city of Satan. The

great aim of every one is money. The Sepoys are intoxicated with rupees. Every man is his own banker, and carries his coin about him in his girdle. But silver is heavy, and gold is scarce; and so the money-dealers, having sold their gold at a profit of sixty or seventy per cent, are now palming off bright copper for good gold. The end will be, that the money-dealers will get all the coin into their possession; and that the Sepoys will then recommence the plunder of the city, and find, in all probability, that the money has disappeared. When Delhi at last falls into our hands, we shall find the soil sown with rupees. The specie will of course be buried in the earth, and there will be "diggings" for our soldiery to outrival California in its palmiest days. And this day of triumph and retribution must come, and we hope soon. We may be short of men and short of ammunition in our camp before Delhi; but a few loyal men are better than legions of traitors, and ammunition when it fails in Delhi cannot be replaced. The failure of copper caps alone, if due precaution is exercised by the authorities, must be fatal in the end to the rebel cause all over the country. Time, indeed, will be our best friend. Already we see the beginning of the end.

From The Times 3. Oct.

NAPOLEON AND ALEXANDER.

THE long-expected interview between the Sovereigns of France and Russia has now taken place. The details have been read by those of us who can feel an interest in any thing which does not concern the position of our Indian Empire. Brilliant equipages, fine uniforms, visits to the Opera, and dinners on a magnificent scale have delighted the assembled guests at Stuttgart; but the meeting itself, though held just fifty years after Tilsit and on the anniversary of Erfurt, will hardly recall, except by contrast, those celebrated interviews. If any thing were required to prove the advance which Europe has made in intelligence and political morality, it is the small results which follow from the schemes and purposes of even the most powerful rulers. We cannot help feeling that the more the world at large learns, and thinks, and acts, the less becomes the influence of the individual statesman. In societies where knowledge is confined to a few and freedom possessed by none, a master spirit may rise

up and change the course of a nation's destinies. The warrior, the orator, the theorist, stands high above his fellows, moulds their habits, directs their instincts, and descends to posterity with a vast reputation. But as communities advance such commanding eminence becomes more difficult and well-nigh impossible. The light is too great for any man's torch sensibly to augment it; the tide is too broad and strong to be diverted into a new channel by any man's effort. Kings become merely the representatives of their subjects' nationality—Ministers the administrators of their countrymen's policy, and the interpreters of their wishes. In England, where this principle has been longest and most fully at work, power has descended from the Crown to the Cabinet, from the Cabinet to Parliament, until the real debating and resolving on great measures seem at last to have settled in the people at large. The nation is its own House of Commons, and the House of Commons its own Prime Minister. And it is well for the peace and security of the world that it should be so. The more great political acts depend on the united opinion of large bodies, the less liable will be the machine of State to be influenced by the errors, the caprices, or the crimes of individuals. What has been going on in England has had its counterpart on the continent of Europe. In spite of Socialist outbreaks and despotic reactions, in spite of subverted constitutions and censor-guarded presses, the people of France and Germany are in no small degree the arbiters of their own fortunes. They read, and talk, and think, and mingle in all the concerns of life, even though the Chambers be closed and the press gives but an uncertain sound. They have the book of history open, and may learn what have been the consequences of former wars, whether of religion, or national hatred, or Royal ambition. They have also before their eyes the results of 40 years of peace. Railways uniting their great cities, steamboats on their navigable rivers, ports on the German Ocean or the Mediterranean doubling their tonnage and growing up into first-rate cities, cotton factories and silk factories dotted about over whole provinces, these are the objects which meet them on every side. There are old men among them whose lives must have been divided into two periods as unlike each other as the death's-head profile is from the

living profile on mediæval carvings. Such men may well compare the year of Tilsit with the year of Stuttgart. Their youth and prime of manhood were passed amid calamities of which their grand-children have often heard the story. On both sides of the Rhine they may furnish the cottage legends of invading armies extending for scores of miles and carrying off every thing in their way; of uncultivated fields, ruined villages, whole populations of women and young boys—the only leavings of the conscription—eating mouldy bread and boiled nettles for want of better food, and pursuing every traveller with a dismal wail of supplication. In each country they may preserve a vivid recollection of military rule,—the hostile garrisons, with their strange language and lawless habits, the fierce commandants ever hanging and shooting for breach of regulations, the insecurity of female honor, the paralysis of all honest exertion, the mutual suspicion, the suspension of social intercourse, the treachery, and the moral degradation of that gloomy time. They may remember their captured capitals, the blowing up of their bridges, the spoiliations of their museums, and all the other humiliations of the conquered. With such memories will Tilsit and Erfurt be associated by the contemporaries of the old King who has been the host at Stuttgart. When we compare the lot of the present generation with all that has been suffered by the men who are now passing away, we feel that there is little fear that Europe should be unable to judge between good and evil.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that a meeting of potentates should in the present day have a diminished importance. The nations of Europe are able to express their opinions, though not in constitutional forms; and the most striking fact of the age is the plain and unconcealed predilection of the continental nations for peace. France in 1855 was found, to the astonishment of the world, to have no appetite for glory. The exploits before Sebastopol created actually less enthusiasm at Paris than among many distant and unconcerned nations. As for Germany, it is pretty certain that she will never undertake any but a purely defensive war. Peace, then, being for the future the probable condition of Europe, the schemes of Sovereigns must be bounded by a very diminished sphere. They may agree to sup-

port certain Ministers in certain petty States, to repress or encourage certain ideas, to tighten or relax a passport system, to increase or lessen customs and duties in common; but beyond their own subjects and the subjects of some weak States their influence will be but limited; and even where they rule, their power is, in the present state of Europe not complete. France and Germany, and even Russia, must move in obedience to laws over which no man, or body of men, has control. The highest deliberations of Kings and statesmen must now relate only to matters of arrangement and detail.

While, then, we must regard the present and all similar interviews as of no great and durable importance, it is yet undoubted that the personal relations of the rulers may be improved by them, and thus a more cordial understanding exist between the Courts of Europe. Where people have to correspond it is certainly an advantage that they should be acquainted and know something of each other's characters and tempers. We may, doubtless, expect from these gatherings of Sovereigns a facilitation of the transaction of European business which is not undesirable. This result will also probably be advanced by the ascendancy which the French Emperor will obtain over his legitimate brethren. If the accounts we receive are accurate, Napoleon III. has no cause to regret having shown himself on neutral ground in company with his Northern rival. In genius, in manners, in affability, in all that commands respect and conciliates esteem, the French Emperor manifested his superiority; and if it be true that the Empress of Russia condescended to deception in order to put a slight on the Consort of Napoleon, it is probable that the incident will only lessen Muscovite influence with all beyond the narrow circle of German royalty. The position of the French Emperor is now one by which any ruler might be elated. He has achieved a double triumph; he has extorted fraternity from military despots, and conciliated good-will from a free people. He has been successful in war, and yet is looked upon as the main upholder of peace. Whatever may be the instincts of the old race of Kings they have been one by one obliged to accept him as an equal, and any want of grace in the act has only added to their own humiliation, as showing that their pride has been unwillingly sacrificed to their

interests. It is as the final triumph of Napoleon III, that the Stuttgart meeting is chiefly remarkable. In other respects it is, perhaps, of less importance than the interview between Alexander and Francis Joseph. Here indeed, a work of great interest may be accomplished—the reconciliation of the estranged Courts of St. Petersburg and Vienna. This consummation no one more heartily desires than ourselves. When Turkey is secure and the Moldo-Wallachian question settled, the hostility between Russia and Austria can only tend to impede the progress of both. We English do not enter into all the niceties of continental politics, we see things from a distance and merely in the gross; but our feeling is that a good personal understanding between all these proud and punctilious rulers is the best means of delivering Europe from the incubus of armed preparation which now presses on its energies.

THE WOMEN.

AMONG the signs which appear to show that Napoleon of France did not exercise the paramount influence expected for him at the Stuttgart conference, is a flagrant breach of arrangement by the Empress of Russia. Originally it was supposed that the Empress Eugénie would accompany her husband, but some difficulty was started in the North. It appears to have been thought that if the "parvenu" Emperor might be admitted as the peer of Imperial potentates, his lady, like the lady of a bishop, does not share his life-patent of nobility. The *Almanach de Gotha* does not know such a thing as "God Almighty's gentility;" and it is not impossible that a princess who is only a daughter of the grandees of Spain might be thought unfit to mix with princesses of Teutonic sublimity.

Perhaps also there might have been another reason lurking in some Imperial minds; and gossip, who has a tale to tell about the intended absence of the Empress of Russia from Stuttgart and her sudden appearance, points out one manifest objection to a meeting with the Empress Eugénie. It has been said that the admiration of the Emperor of Russia once centered itself in a fair face still resident at Stuttgart, and that a certain sentiment of retrospective jealousy rendered that place too

hateful for his present helpmate to enter it by his side. Such personal complications in imperial arrangements are not unprecedented in the biography of high politics, and are sufficiently intelligible. Quite as intelligible also would be a feeling of intense anxiety at the fact that the quondam admirer and still beautiful admiree were within the walls of the same city; and conjugal anxiety would account for the manner in which the Empress broke through the arrangements for her absence. Another explanation is that the "strong-minded" Empress was fearful of a different seduction—a new subjugation of an Alexander by a Napoleon; which the common mind of the present Alexander and the superior skill of the present Napoleon rendered possible. One writer asks, why, if the Czarina was too "unwell" to meet the Empress of France, she could not keep up her indisposition until the Emperor Napoleon had departed? for she might then have come to look after her husband without complicating the situation. But who can account for the impatience of woman? And the incident, if it is true, points out one serious objection which the Russian Empress might have entertained to the idea of meeting the Empress Eugénie, for she is not only one of the most beautiful women in Europe but one of the most engaging.

If Napoleon has failed in the intelligent object ascribed to him at Stuttgart, it is most probable that his worst obstacles were motives at least as petty as these. He has risen to power on the strength of something which has great influence—"ideas." In some respects he may be considered a Disraeli who has had the fine fortune to ascend a throne. But how difficult it would be for even a Disraeli to make his ideas intelligible to the common run of vulgar kings and emperors! how difficult to teach them how to handle the strange and fearful objects! Napoleon showed his capacity for departing from the routine of commonplace, if in nothing else, in proclaiming himself a parvenu and raising to sit by his side a parvenue Empress. The parvenue has not been appreciated at Stuttgart, and ideas have not been recognized as part of the raw material of legitimate and established Imperialism.—*Spectator 3rd October.*